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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

The girl child

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/140. It contains a brief overview of international obligations and global commitments with respect to the girl child, emanating from human rights treaties, international conferences and legal and policy developments. It addresses progress and challenges in multiple areas and specifically considers the situation of and response to girls living in child-headed households.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/140, entitled "The girl child", in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on its implementation. The report was to emphasize fulfilment of the rights of girls in child-headed households, with a view to assessing the impact of the resolution on the well-being of the girl child. For the purpose of its preparation, notes verbales requesting relevant information on implementation of resolution 66/140 were sent to Member States and United Nations agencies, programmes and departments. Requests were also sent to key non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working to promote girls' rights.

2. The present report follows the 2011 report submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session (A/66/257), which emphasized progress and challenges in addressing the issue of child marriage and forced marriage. Section II outlines international and regional frameworks with respect to the rights of girls and key obligations and commitments of States in this respect. Section III describes the situation of the girl child and notes challenges in the areas raised in General Assembly resolution 66/140. Section IV analyses the situation of girls living in child-headed households. Section V notes progress towards fulfilment of the rights of girls and section VI contains recommendations for action.

II. Legal/normative framework and global commitments

A. Human rights treaties and other international conventions

3. The realization of the rights of children, including girl children, is the obligation of every State, as established by a comprehensive international legal framework. In addition to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocols thereto, which outline a comprehensive set of rights to be enjoyed "without discrimination of any kind",[1] including discrimination on the grounds of sex, all fundamental human rights treaties include provisions confirming the principle of non-discrimination and equality between men and women, boys and girls. Among these treaties, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is of particular importance, as it relates directly to the situation and well-being of the girl child.

4. In addition to human rights treaties, legal obligations are entrenched in binding labour law instruments, including the 1973 Minimum Age Convention (No. 138), the 1999 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182) and the 2011 Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189) of the International Labour Organization (ILO). This legal framework is further strengthened by regional human rights instruments, such as the 2005 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

5. During the reporting period, the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted four general comments aiming at interpreting the Convention and providing guidance to States on its implementation: general comment No. 14, on article 3 para. 1, the right of the child to have his or her interests taken as a primary consideration;

[1] See United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531, art. 2.

general comment No. 15, on article 24, the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health; general comment No. 16, on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights; and general comment No. 17, on article 31, the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts.

6. The Committee on the Rights of the Child makes specific reference, in general comment No. 15, to gender-based discrimination as being particularly pervasive, affecting a wide range of outcomes from female infanticide/foeticide to discriminatory infant and young child-feeding practices, gender stereotyping and access to services. The Committee notes in general comment No. 14, on the right of the child to have his or her interests assessed and taken as a primary consideration, that, although preservation of religious and cultural values and traditions as part of the child's identity must be considered, practices inconsistent or incompatible with the rights established in the Convention are not in the child's best interests.

7. The difficulties faced by girls in terms of enjoying their rights to rest, leisure, play and recreational activities are also acknowledged in general comment No. 17. The Committee recognizes that these challenges arise, particularly in adolescence, due to domestic responsibilities, protective concerns of parents, lack of facilities and cultural assumptions that limit the expectations and behaviour of girls. Although general comment No. 16, on State obligations regarding the impact of business enterprises on children's rights, does not specifically focus on girls, it nonetheless identifies phenomena of which girls are likely to become victims, such as sexualization in the media and sexual abuse and exploitation through the Internet and in the context of travel and tourism.

8. On 20 December 2012, the General Assembly adopted resolution 67/146, in which it urged States to condemn all harmful practices that affect women and girls, in particular female genital mutilations. It also urged them to take all necessary measures, including enforcing legislation, raising awareness and allocating sufficient resources, to protect women and girls from this form of violence.

B. International conferences, intergovernmental bodies and related commitments

9. Member States have made extensive commitments in international forums to eliminate discrimination against the girl child. These forums have included the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. Both the Cairo Programme of Action and the Beijing Platform for Action include strategic objectives on issues ranging from elimination of all forms of discrimination against the girl child and negative cultural attitudes and practices affecting girls, to promotion and protection of the rights of girls in education, health and nutrition, child labour, violence and participation in economic and political life.

10. In its resolution 64/145, entitled "The girl child", the General Assembly reaffirmed other outcomes of major United Nations summits and conferences relevant to the girl child, including the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"; the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development; the declaration adopted by the Commission on the Status of

Women at its forty-ninth session; and the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission at its fifty-first session, under the theme, "The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child".

11. At its fifty-seventh session, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. The Commission urged States to abolish practices and legislation that perpetuate and condone violence against women and girls. It also called upon them to take specific steps to address violence against women and girls in the home, the workplace, educational institutions and public places.

12. The report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Human Rights Council, entitled "Thematic study on the issue of violence against women and girls and disability" (A/HRC/20/5), indicates that women and girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to violence during situations of conflict and natural disasters, which may force migration or displacement. Disasters compound the social effects of disability, especially for girls and women.

13. At its twenty-first session, in 2012, the Human Rights Council considered the joint report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children on prevention of and responses to violence against children within the juvenile justice system (A/HRC/21/25). The report noted that, while girls were a minority in the juvenile justice system, they required special protection. The report cited the 2008 report by the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (A/HRC/7/3), in which he stated that custodial violence against women, including girls, very often included rape and other forms of sexual violence, such as threats of rape, touching, "virginity testing", being stripped naked, invasive body searches, insults and humiliations of a sexual nature.

III. Discrimination and the situation of the girl child

A. Poverty

14. Gender discrimination manifests itself in different ways, according to cultures and country contexts, but invariably serves as an economic impediment. In some parts of the world, girls are more burdened by household poverty than boys. They may be taken out of school, forced to work in inappropriate environments or married early, in order to ease the hardship of their families.

15. Poverty can be an impetus for migration to secure or improve employment opportunities. However, migration can also increase girls' vulnerability by reducing access to support systems or social and health services. In other cases, male siblings or parents migrate, leaving girls to care for siblings left behind.

B. Education

16. Throughout the last decade, progress in education has been significant. According to the 2012 *Education for All Global Monitoring Report: Youth and*

Skills — Putting Education to Work, of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), globally, the number of primary school-age children out-of-school fell from 108 million to 61 million between 1999 and 2010; in developing countries, the proportion of girls in the out-of-school population decreased from 58 per cent to 53 per cent.

17. However, global averages do not reflect the stark disparities between regions and countries. In spite of their unprecedented progress in school enrolment and completion, countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia lag behind other countries.

18. According to the same report, global data also reveal that the decrease in out-of-school children occurred mainly up to 2004; the actual rate of progress has since decelerated. The number of children completing primary education has not kept pace with increasing enrolment, and as many as 250 million children could be failing to learn to read or write by the time they should reach grade four.

19. In the report, it was stated that, while more girls and boys are completing primary education, the growing demand for secondary education poses a serious challenge for countries with limited resources. In sub-Saharan Africa, about one quarter of the children who complete primary school are unable to go on to secondary education. As a result, over 34 million adolescent girls of lower secondary age were not in school in 2010.[2]

C. Health

20. In some countries where cultural norms favour sons over daughters, mortality rates are relatively higher among girls than boys. Although it is normal for more boys to be born than girls, some countries have a substantial deficit in the ratio of girls to boys born, which may be the result of prenatal sex selection.

21. Complications related to pregnancy and childbirth are among the leading causes of death among adolescent girls,[3] and they have limited access to and use of contraception. In developing countries overall, 22 per cent of adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 who are married or in union use contraceptives, versus 61 per cent of married girls and women aged 15 to 49 years.[4] Moreover, young mothers are less equipped to care for their children than adult mothers, and their children are more likely to experience adverse outcomes.

22. As many as 18 per cent of children and adolescents in low- and middle-income countries suffer from poor mental health. Girls in particular suffer from anxiety and mood disorders.[5]

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[2] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Global Education Digest: Opportunities Lost — The Impact of Grade Repetition and Early School Leaving*, 2012.

[3] UNICEF, *Progress for Children: A Report Card on Adolescence*, No. 10, April 2012 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.12.XX.2).

[4] UNFPA, *Marrying Too Young: End Child Marriage*, 2012.

[5] Vikram Patel and others, "Promoting child and adolescent mental health in low and middle income countries", *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, vol. 49, No. 3 (March 2008), pp. 313-334.

D. HIV and AIDS

23. Approximately 34 million people were living with HIV worldwide in 2011, and an estimated 2.1 million of them were adolescents aged 10 to 19. The burden is particularly severe in eastern and southern Africa, where an estimated 17.2 million people were living with HIV, including 1.3 million adolescents,[6] of whom approximately 62 per cent were girls.[7] In eastern and southern Africa, young women aged 15 to 24 were even more vulnerable to HIV in 2011, with prevalence rates twice as high in young women (4.3 per cent) as in young men (1.9 per cent). In some countries in southern Africa, prevalence rates among young women were proportionally even higher, at 15.4 per cent, compared to 6.4 per cent for young men.[8]

24. While the greater risk faced by girls is partly attributable to physiology, there is substantive evidence that gender inequality and violence against women are also critical factors. Sexual violence towards girls may increase the risk of transmission, and unequal power relations undermine their capacity to negotiate safer sex.

25. Nearly all countries specifically include women in their national HIV and AIDS strategies, but reports illustrate a varied understanding of what it means to employ a gender perspective. Approaches may not involve women and girls in sufficient or meaningful ways, and fewer than half of countries report that they budget for activities for women and girls or related gender equality initiatives.

E. Food and nutrition

26. Girls and women are physiologically vulnerable to anaemia, which globally affects 47 per cent of children under 5 years of age, 42 per cent of pregnant women and 30 per cent of non-pregnant women.[9] The risk is greatest to the poorest children and to children whose mothers suffered from anaemia or had no education.[10] In adolescence, girls have greater iron needs and increased nutritional demands, and they may experience early pregnancies. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, all menstruating girls living in settings where anaemia is highly prevalent (20 per cent or above) need to receive weekly iron-folate supplements. However, no coverage data are available, and implementation programmes are believed to be rare. Anaemia has a negative impact on maternal and infant health and on learning ability. Poor nutrition in utero and during early childhood constrains the capacity of girls to support healthy foetal and infant growth and perpetuates an intergenerational cycle of undernutrition.

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[6] UNAIDS, *Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, 2012, published estimates.

[7] UNAIDS, *Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, 2012, unpublished estimates.

[8] UNAIDS, *Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, 2012, published estimates.

[9] E. McLean and others, *Worldwide Prevalence of Anaemia 1993-2005: WHO Global Database on Anaemia*, WHO, 2008. Available from http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596657_eng.pdf (accessed 3 June 2013).

[10] Y. Balarjan and others, "Anaemia in low-income and middle-income countries", *The Lancet*, vol. 378, issue 9808, 17 December 2011.

F. Water, sanitation and hygiene

27. Exposure to unsafe water and inadequate sanitation (especially open defecation) and hygiene are leading causes of diarrhoea, pneumonia and undernutrition. Girls under 15 years of age are 50 per cent more likely to bear responsibility for collecting water as boys in the same age group.[11] In some cases, girls walk great distances to collect water, increasing their workload and reducing the time they can spend on education and health care.

28. Travelling to remote water points and toilets also makes girls susceptible to harassment and rape. They are particularly vulnerable to dropping out of school, partly because many find it difficult to continue their schooling when toilet and washing facilities are not private, not safe or simply not available. When schools have adequate facilities — particularly toilets and washstands that facilitate menstrual hygiene — a major obstacle to attendance is removed.

G. Violence, exploitation and abuse

29. Violence, exploitation and abuse affect millions of girls worldwide and may occur in their communities, schools, workplaces or homes. Girls are at much greater risk of sexual violence than boys.

30. Both girls and boys suffer from harmful practices. However, due to deeply rooted gender-based discrimination, some harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting, child marriage, forced marriage, food taboos, forced feeding, honour killings, acid attacks, sexual slavery, stoning, son preference, virginity testing and breast ironing affect girls disproportionately. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimate that approximately one in three young women aged 20 to 24 was married before the age of 18, and around 11 per cent entered into marriage before the age of 15.[12] Although the prevalence of female genital mutilation/cutting is in decline, progress is slow and millions of girls are at risk of enduring the procedure. Some harmful practices also reflect ill-perceptions, misconceptions or discriminatory and harmful beliefs towards marginalized girls, such as those with disabilities or albinism and girls accused of witchcraft.

31. Discrimination against girls with disabilities is compounded by stigma and construed inequality. Girls and young women with disabilities are more likely to be institutionalized, forced into marriage, to experience forced sterilization and forced abortion, and to be victims of physical and sexual violence.

H. Work and labour

32. UNICEF estimates that around 23 per cent of all children aged 5 to 14 in the least developed countries are involved in child labour.[13] This is work that is unacceptable, either because the children are too young or because the work they do is unsuitable for a person below the age of 18.

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[11] WHO and UNICEF, *Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation: 2012 Update*, 2012.

[12] UNICEF, *Committing to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed*, 2012.

[13] UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2013: Children with Disabilities*, 2013.

33. Girls often suffer a double work burden, combining agricultural work with domestic chores. They are also more likely than boys to be engaged in domestic work in a third-party household. The hidden nature of this work increases their risk and sometimes takes the form of servitude or slavery.

I. Humanitarian crises and conflict

34. In humanitarian contexts, risks and their impacts are highly gendered and often shaped by discrimination and cultural values. Parents may arrange early marriages for their daughters as a way of coping with acute household deprivation due to crises, and girls are often forced to beg or engage in transactional sex to meet their own or their families' needs. Crisis-affected girls are more likely than boys to lack food, schooling and health services. Girls with disabilities are often at even greater risk of neglect as a result of their relative invisibility.

35. In the context of armed conflict, the widespread recruitment of girls for non-combatant purposes and abduction for use as sex slaves by armed groups remain a grave concern. Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to rape and sexual exploitation at the hands of armed forces, community members, humanitarian workers and uniformed personnel.

J. Girls' participation

36. Discrimination against girls restricts their mobility, access to information and opportunities for community and civic engagement. In some countries, girls also have fewer opportunities than boys to establish friendships and networks and are not consulted regarding the important decisions that will shape their lives. The fewer social assets girls have, the less likely they are to benefit from programmes that target children and adolescents.

37. Despite efforts by some Governments to incorporate the principle of respect for the views of children in policies, programmes and legislation, sociocultural norms regarding the role of children and adolescents in society limit, and often prevent, girls and boys from expressing their views on a wide range of issues that affect them. In addition, administrative and legal proceedings are inadequately safeguarded, often lacking mechanisms for ensuring the rights of girls to be heard without discrimination, manipulation or intimidation.

IV. Efforts to fulfil the rights of girls in child-headed households

38. Child-headed households are often associated with the HIV epidemic. Globally, the epidemic has resulted in up to 17.3 million orphans, the vast majority of them in African countries.[14] While orphans have traditionally been cared for by their extended families, the increasing illness and death of parents has overwhelmed family capacities and exhausted social safety nets.

39. Child-headed households exist in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. However, the nature and scale of the phenomenon is unclear, due to a lack

[14] UNAIDS, *Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, 2012, unpublished estimates.

of relevant data and to definitional ambiguities. National surveys rarely record the number of child-headed households. Where figures exist, they are often derived from broader sets of statistics, such as poverty indicators or statistics relating to orphans, and therefore do not specifically reflect the numbers of children living without parental or adult care. Households may — or may not — be considered as child-headed when parents are still alive but have left their children unsupervised while they live or work elsewhere for long periods; when children live with parents who are terminally or chronically ill and require care themselves; or when children live with extended family members who lack the mental, physical or financial resources to care for them. Therefore, a comprehensive situation analysis does not exist.

40. Moreover, in the vast majority of countries, indicators are not sex-disaggregated. Girls living in child-headed households are neither officially acknowledged nor recognized as a group with specific needs and are not reflected in national policies or planning. The degree to which their rights are fulfilled is categorically unknown, but evidence suggests they are particularly vulnerable, in comparison both to boys and to other girls.

41. While they must assume adult responsibilities, children in child-headed households may not have the same legal rights as adults. Their country's laws and policies may not protect children's property or inheritance rights, or assist them to enforce the rights they do have. In addition, they often do not possess important documentation, including the birth, marriage or death certificates that might protect their right to inherit their parents' property. Girls are even less likely to be protected by laws than boys. While some country constitutions specifically recognize gender equality and prohibit discrimination, "customary laws" often take precedence, under which women are entitled to a lesser share than male relatives or are dispossessed of family property altogether.

42. Children in child-headed households may experience feelings of loneliness and abandonment. They may be traumatized, having watched their parents die slow and painful deaths. They may be subject to discrimination and alienation due to positive HIV status, either their deceased parents' or their own. They may inherit their parents' financial debts or may incur their own debt to neighbours and be unable to repay them. These types of experiences expose children to high levels of psychosocial stress, and girls have been found to be more vulnerable than boys.

43. Children from child-headed households are even more disadvantaged and less able to access critical services than other poor children. They are more likely to be malnourished, less likely to be able to meet basic material needs — items such as blankets, shoes or clothing[15] — and face difficulties accessing public services. Exhausted by the demands of caring for siblings, performing household chores and earning income, along with their de facto caregiving responsibilities, girls are particularly prone to stop going to school or sporadic attendance.

44. Parents or other trusted family members would be expected to help children to understand puberty and other developmental and emotional changes that occur during adolescence, so children who lack this support are less likely to be informed about health issues, family planning and protection from sexually transmitted

[15] UNICEF, *Progress Report for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS*, 2009.

diseases, including HIV. They are also less likely to approach health care professionals for information, condoms or needed medical treatment.

45. Evidence from several African countries suggests that girls heading households may feel forced to perform sexual favours in exchange for money, basic goods or protection. While such relationships may seem consensual, young women may have more difficulty refusing or negotiating safe sex when they are concerned with survival and meeting their basic material needs.

46. The desperate need to make money renders child-headed households more susceptible to economic exploitation, hazardous work, forced labour and physical abuse. More than one quarter of the detected victims of trafficking are children, and two of every three trafficked children are girls.[16] They are often less empowered than boys, both socially and physically, and are even more vulnerable when they lack the oversight of caring adults.

47. Addressing the rights of girl children in child-headed households is critical to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and contributes to implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It also corresponds with the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (A/HRC/11/L.13), which stipulate that, support and services should be available to siblings who have lost their parents or caregivers and choose to remain together in their household, to the extent that the eldest sibling is both willing and deemed capable of acting as the household head.

48. In 2013, a handbook was launched to help Governments to implement the internationally agreed standards and principles articulated in the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. Based on input of Governments, NGOs, United Nations agencies and academia, and field tested in Argentina and Malawi, the handbook explores implications of the guidelines for policymakers, points to opportunities for leadership and provides insights for employing principles within contexts of limited resources.

49. In cases where children remain in households without parental care, strengthening their capacity to provide and care for themselves and their families is crucial. Interventions have taken several forms. The Government of Zimbabwe, for example, has intervened at household level, enabling child-headed households to access financial and social services. Junior Farmer and Field Life Schools, established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), combine agricultural education and skills training with promotion of decent and gender-equitable rural employment. The aim is to make participants aware of their labour and property rights while gaining important life skills in nutrition, health and protection from HIV. Increased self-reliance empowers children to fulfil their own needs, enables them to make better decisions and reduces their susceptibility to manipulation and exploitation.

50. In some cases, building community capacities can prevent the need for children to live by themselves and can empower communities to act as a support system. SOS Children's Villages International collaborates with organizations in Ethiopia, Uganda and Zimbabwe to build family and economic capacity and the

[16] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012*, 2012.

skills of communities to provide social support to families at risk of abandoning children. In China, the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women supports the Beijing Cultural Development Center for Rural Women to prevent violence against girls whose parents have migrated to cities for work. Recognizing the girls' vulnerability to physical and sexual abuse, the Center trains guardians, teachers, police officers and medical professionals to better protect girls and to identify physical and mental trauma among children who have been abused or abandoned.

51. The Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children help to enable children to remain together as a household and safeguard their rights. The Guidelines call for legal frameworks to protect the rights of children to land, health and education when there is no possibility for children to live in an adult-headed household. States should ensure the existence of a legally mandated public body to act as guardian, so that child-headed households are protected from all forms of exploitation and abuse and receive support and social services from the community. States should also address daily deprivations such as the lack of food, as well as loss of social interaction, which causes long-term exclusion and exploitation.

52. The scale and severity of risks relating to girls in child-headed households have yet to be adequately examined or addressed. This is due largely to the lack of statistics and information, and it underlines the importance of having a clearer definition and more thorough understanding of such households. Internationally agreed criteria should determine whether a household is classified as child-headed and national surveys should count these households and include sex- and age-disaggregated data on them.

53. Because girls and boys face different challenges and employ different coping strategies, Government policies must be informed by gender-specific information. Girls with experience in child-headed households should be involved in research and planning to better articulate the experiences and perspectives that have yet to be fully examined.

54. Governments should ensure that girls who head households are legally recognized, with birth registration, land and property ownership rights, and access to legal representation. Legislation should ensure that they can access financial, social and health services and take measures to reduce the likelihood that they will be forced to leave or miss school. Girls in child-headed households are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, so addressing household poverty is critical. Interventions can include subsidies to lower the cost of living, enhanced business and training opportunities to strengthen financial capacity, and scholarships to enable continued education.

55. Interventions at the community level should prioritize socialization of children, raise human rights awareness and encourage community dialogue and information sharing, ultimately to build trust and solidarity. Social protection measures should be established to strengthen community systems, enhance peer support and better protect girls from violence.

V. Progress and achievements

56. Progress has been made in a number of areas with respect to promoting the rights of girls and implementing General Assembly resolution 66/140. Some key achievements are outlined below.

A. Strengthening of legal frameworks and commitments

57. Numerous States have adopted laws, policies, action plans and strategies to address the multiple forms of violence against girls, such as human trafficking, sexual violence and exploitation, female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage. In addition, the institutional response to violence and exploitation has been strengthened through coordination and capacity-building in the social welfare, justice, education and health sectors.

58. Since the December 2011 adoption of General Assembly resolution 66/139 on strengthening collaboration on child protection within the United Nations system, and resolution 66/140 on the girl child, 11 States became parties and one State became signatory to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; 35 States signed and 3 States ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure; and 7 States became parties to the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission has specifically called upon countries to sign and/or ratify the latter Optional Protocol and to incorporate its provisions into national legislation, criminalizing the recruitment of minors.

59. ILO Convention No. 189, "Decent work for domestic workers", represents a major milestone in regulating issues surrounding decent work and providing a foundation for the development of legal and policy frameworks geared towards the elimination of domestic child labour. Within just over a year of its adoption in 2011, Mauritius, the Philippines and Uruguay ratified the Convention, and at least 20 other countries have initiated ratification procedures or are taking steps in that direction.

B. Joint initiatives

60. The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Adolescent Girls supports Governments and civil society in developing countries to advocate for targeted, comprehensive policies and programmes to empower the hardest-to-reach girls, especially marginalized adolescent girls aged 10 to 14. Joint programmes are under way in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Liberia and Malawi. The task force is co-chaired by UNICEF and UNFPA and includes ILO, UNESCO, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and WHO.

61. The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative collaborates with a range of partners and networks to maximize resources and results for girls' education and gender equality. In 2012, the Initiative strengthened its collaboration with the Global Partnership for Education to support development, implementation and monitoring of gender-responsive education sector plans in participating countries.

62. The Together for Girls initiative, a global private-public partnership including the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-Women, WHO, the United States Government and members of the private sector, works to bring an end to violence against children and, in particular, sexual violence against girls. A hallmark of Together for Girls' work are nationwide, population-based household surveys designed to determine the prevalence of and circumstances surrounding emotional, physical and sexual violence against males and females under 18 years of age and prevalence of violence in the past 12 months.

63. The United Nations Development Programme, ILO, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and WHO are partnering to improve guidance and policy cohesion on young people from key populations, including girls who are survivors of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

C. Improvement in sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis

64. Comprehensive data disaggregated by sex and age enable United Nations agencies, Member States and NGOs to better understand situations, cite areas requiring intervention and determine which resources and actions are required to address challenges appropriately. These data also allow for monitoring and evaluation of progress so that programmes and actions can be adapted and improved, as necessary.

65. In 2011, UNICEF issued the report entitled "Boys and girls in the life cycle", a compilation of sex-disaggregated statistics revealing that, while gender disparities in education, health and protection are relatively small in early childhood, gaps increase significantly in adolescence. In 2012, UNFPA released a report entitled "Marrying too young: end child marriage". It documented the scope, prevalence and inequities associated with child marriage and made projections on the number of girls who would be married by their eighteenth birthday. Responding to General Assembly resolution 66/140, UNICEF recently released a new report on female genital mutilation/cutting. It includes data representing 29 countries where the practice is concentrated and data on attitudes and circumstances surrounding it. The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs compiled data on legal age at marriage in 195 countries and presented it in its "World Fertility Policies 2011" wallchart.[17]

66. As a means to promote more consistent statistics on the well-being of girls and women across countries and regions, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics has identified a set of 52 gender indicators for global reporting. The United Nations Statistics Division has finalized guidelines for producing, analysing and disseminating statistics on violence against girls and women.

D. Strengthening of education

67. The Global Partnership for Education envisions a good-quality education for all children everywhere. It provides strong incentives and technical and financial support to developing country partners to include gender strategies in their

[17] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.11.XIII.5.

education plans. Currently, 68 per cent of girls in partnership countries finish primary school, compared with 56 per cent in 2002, and 18 partner countries now have as many girls as boys completing primary school.

68. Australia, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil and Denmark, among other countries, have been identified as "champions" in their support of the Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative. Launched in 2012 as a means to renew and reinvigorate global commitments to education, the Initiative focuses on putting every child in school, improving the quality of learning and fostering global citizenship. UNICEF supports these objectives by ensuring that education opportunities are available to the most vulnerable groups, including girls, children with disabilities and children living in conflict zones.

69. Global enrolment rates among refugee children are generally low, and among refugee girls they are even lower. Gender disparities are particularly marked in some parts of South Asia and in Eastern Africa, including the Horn of Africa, where girls are less likely than boys to attend primary school. The 2012-2016 education strategy of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which has been rolled out in 20 priority countries, employs targeted interventions to enrol girls, monitor their attendance and ensure their school completion.

E. Improvements in health and HIV prevention

70. In most regions, in the aggregate, girls and boys are equally likely to be immunized against measles, to be breastfed, to benefit from malaria interventions and to receive proper care for diarrhoeal diseases and pneumonia — the two leading causes of under-five deaths. However, gender differences exist within and across countries.

71. There is improvement in adolescent girls' access to reproductive health services in some countries. The Government of Italy, for example, has improved access to contraceptives, specifically focusing on girls under the age of 15. Contraception and reproductive rights are core elements of sexual education modules in Mexico, and the Government has also implemented policies aimed at reducing maternal mortality. In 2012, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees supported the Government of Malaysia in the provision of reproductive health counselling services for child brides.

72. HIV risk is frequently aggravated by gender inequality, meaning that comprehensive responses must address prevailing social dynamics. In Malawi, the Coalition of Women Living with HIV/AIDS has used an evidence-based approach to challenge gender norms, resulting in increased condom use and a decline in gender-based violence. The Malawi programme challenges gender inequality through effective communication and by work to catalyse a transition from a male-centred approach to decision-making in the intimate realm to a couple-centred one in which the sexual and reproductive health needs and rights of both women and men are respected. Among the strengths of the initiative are the engagement of men on issues of gender-based violence; the strengthening of linkages between community leaders and support groups; and the community dialogue approach to raising awareness on the harmful practices and entrenched gender norms that predispose women to HIV infection, sexual and reproductive health abuses, violence and stigma. The

Government of Mauritania also reports that prevention and HIV testing campaigns target girls and women.

73. The Government of Japan, in its support to the global work on HIV and AIDS, is promoting an integrated approach of combining efforts to combat infectious diseases, including HIV and AIDS, with strengthening of health systems and improvement of maternal and child health, including prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. This effort is based on its Global Health Policy 2011-2015 and was announced at the United Nations High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, in September 2010.

F. Improvements in access to water, sanitation and hygiene

74. Efforts continue to bring water closer to the home so that girls do not miss school or risk being harmed while walking long distances to collect water. According to a 2010 World Bank study, "in countries where substantial gender gaps in schooling exist, both boys' and girls' enrolments improve with better access to water". The study revealed, for example, that "a one-hour reduction in the time to [access] water would increase girls' and boys' enrolment rates by about 8 or 9 per cent in Yemen and by 18 to 19 per cent in Pakistan".[18] New behaviour change approaches, which encourage communities to end open defecation and improve sanitation, have resulted in record numbers of people using private household toilets. Further, concerted efforts are being made to address the lack of water, sanitation and hygiene in schools. UNICEF, NGOs and other organizations are working to address the issue of menstrual hygiene management, including a focus on sex-segregated toilet facilities in schools.

G. Approaches to addressing violence against girls

75. Efforts to decrease violence, exploitation and abuse of girls complement rights-based legislation with responsive social services and interventions. In 2009, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East defined a multisectoral approach to address gender-based violence across its fields of operations. It also established referral mechanisms to detect survivors of gender-based violence and provide them with services, including health care, psychosocial support and legal advice. In addition, a comprehensive electronic case management system has been launched to ensure better follow-up of refugees seeking assistance due to gender-based violence.

76. In Rwanda, key line ministries have officially approved the Revised Protocol on the Multi-Sectoral Management of Sexual Abuse and Violence of Survivors, which articulates minimum standards of care for children and women across the justice, health, security, education, welfare, youth and media sectors. A similar protocol for victims of gender-based violence has been signed in Sierra Leone. Malta is currently in the process of ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

[18] G. Koolwal and D. van de Walle, *Access to Water, Women's Work and Child Outcomes*, Policy Research Working Paper No. 5302, World Bank, 2010.

Perpetrators of domestic violence are required to attend support groups and address the harmful beliefs that underlie their actions.

H. Efforts to end harmful practices

77. In 2012, the first International Day of the Girl Child drew specific attention to the practice of child marriage. The Executive Directors of UNICEF, UNFPA and UN-Women issued a joint statement calling for dedicated resources to accelerate efforts to end child marriage, and UNFPA committed an additional $20 million to reach the most marginalized adolescent girls in 12 countries with high prevalence of child marriage. In the same year, in its resolution 2012/1, the Commission on Population and Development urged Member States to enact and strictly enforce laws concerning the minimum legal age of consent and the minimum age for marriage.

78. Member States have made notable efforts to address harmful practices. In the Niger, which has the highest prevalence of child marriage in the world, initiatives include awareness-raising, safe spaces and education programmes targeted at parents, young girls and those in positions of influence. In Germany, new legislation has been passed to prevent forced marriage and better protect victims.

79. By 2012, female genital mutilation/cutting had been abandoned by approximately 10,000 communities in countries covered by the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting. In Somalia, where almost all women have experienced some form of the practice, a new Constitution outlaws all forms of it. In partnership with Save the Children and local NGOs and ministries, the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women empowers women themselves to stop the practice in the Gambia, Guinea, Mali and Senegal. In Mauritania, a fatwa against female genital mutilation/cutting encourages voluntary abandonment, and a zero-tolerance campaign has been launched in some of the most highly affected areas.

I. Efforts to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation

80. Various measures to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation have been employed by Member States. In The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, for example, a website has been established for reporting sexual abuse of children and to encourage sexually abused children to report their own experiences. Viet Nam has developed a National Plan of Action against Sexual Exploitation of Children. Japan has been promoting measures to prevent access to images of child pornography on the Internet, and Spain has employed new technologies to detect and prosecute international child pornography networks.

J. Efforts to build peaceful societies

81. UNICEF, the Government of the Netherlands and other key partners support the Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (2012-2015) in 13 priority countries. The programme targets children and adolescents, with a specific focus on girls, to prevent and resolve conflicts and address gender-based violence and rights violations of girls and women in conflict-affected countries.

82. The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund is supporting a number of UNICEF-led projects in post-conflict countries that benefit the girl child, such as projects on child protection, child rights, education, sexual violence and reintegration. In Nepal, for example, the Peacebuilding Fund has supported Government efforts to combat child rights violations, with particular emphasis on recognition of sexual violence as a tool of conflict. It also provided comprehensive services to women and girl victims of sexual violence.

K. Inclusion of marginalized girls

83. Participants at the 2013 fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women agreed on the need for targeted attention to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. In response to concerns expressed by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities regarding the situation of women and girls with disabilities, a working group on article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will analyse information submitted during the general debate. The working group will then draft a general comment on matters including restrictions to sexual, reproductive and maternity rights of girls with disabilities and the failure to include gender as a cross-cutting issue in public policies.

84. UN-Women, UNICEF, UNFPA, ILO and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children recently launched a study entitled "Breaking the silence on violence against indigenous girls, adolescents and young women: a call to action based on an overview of existing evidence from Africa, Asia Pacific and Latin America". The study contributes to knowledge on the nature, prevalence, incidence and consequences of violence affecting indigenous girls, adolescents and youth. Preliminary results of the study had served as a substantive technical contribution to the January 2012 expert group meeting on "Combating violence against indigenous women and girls: article 22 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples", the (2012) eleventh session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

VI. Recommendations

85. The examples above demonstrate significant progress, and these efforts must be continuously enhanced and expanded. This demands decisive action from Governments; support from development agencies, NGOs and civil society; and the active engagement of girls, boys, men and women.

A. Use of evidence to inform the promotion of girls' rights

86. Girl children are more likely to have reduced access to education, to experience vulnerabilities and discrimination, and to be exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse and domestic labour. Better understanding of the underlying social and economic determinants of these and other deprivations is critical. Identifying the causal factors at national and local levels should inform the design of appropriate programmatic responses. Experience shows that specific, evidence-based interventions have pronounced impacts in terms of girls' access to health care

and education; improvements in nutrition outcomes; use of maternal health services; delayed marriage; reduction in self-reported sexual activity (particularly transactional); increased contraceptive use and risk prevention; and reduction in exploited labour activity.

87. Policies and programmes should aim to expand the life choices available to girls and contribute to the development of girls and their communities. In addition, data analysis should be used to identify and target geographic "hot spots" where high proportions and numbers of adolescent girls are particularly at risk of leaving school, marrying early and becoming heads of households.

B. Implementation of inclusive policies

88. Because some groups of girls are less visible within their societies, States should make deliberate, formalized efforts to ensure the inclusion of girls from child-headed households, girls who are displaced, girls in prison, girls with disabilities, indigenous girls and other marginalized groups. Specifically, States should implement inclusive policies for decision-making processes at all levels and seek the input of marginalized girls in policy and programme design.

C. Need to address gender inequality in education as a matter of urgency

89. Inequalities will not be reduced and interventions will not be sustainable without first addressing educational inequalities. Lessons learned in countries that have met the second and third Goals of the Millennium Development Goals indicate that solutions must be adapted to each country context. However, successful approaches should include, in principle:

(a) Improvements to the educational system, recognizing free and compulsory education as a judiciable right, supported by evidence-based planning and monitoring, good financing systems, healthy budgets, minimal barriers to access and attention to quality;

(b) Targeted interventions to improve girls' enrolment, primary completion, progression into secondary school and improved learning outcomes, including early childhood development and social protection measures, such as cash transfers and scholarships;

(c) Sustained political commitment to girls' equity, from subnational levels to the highest levels of Government, and across political parties;

(d) Community-based interventions that increase the likelihood of parents supporting their daughters' right to education and strengthen their participation at all levels.

90. Accelerated progress in girls' education requires sustained effort to ensure that their actual experiences in school and their status within their families and communities are addressed through responsive policies and strategies. Further, greater attention is needed to promote relevant skills development among girls, including investments in social networking and innovations relating to science

technology and engineering, to make the effective transition from school to work in a fast-changing knowledge-based economy.

D. Improvements in girls' health and nutrition

91. Improving girls' health and nutrition yields many social and economic benefits for girls and their families, breaking the cycle of ill health and the intergenerational transmission of malnutrition, gender discrimination and poverty. Healthy and well-nourished girls become more capable citizens and workers.

92. Governments and partners should ensure girls' access to health and nutrition information and services, including sexual and reproductive health and HIV testing and affordable treatment. They also should promote and expand coverage of focused health and nutrition interventions for girls, especially the poorest. In addition, health sector policies, service delivery and financing arrangements should be reviewed and modified to respond to girls' specific health needs.

93. Programmes should be supported to create safe spaces for girls to build their social, economic and health assets to reduce their vulnerabilities and to overcome the discrimination and challenges they face. Adolescent girls must be provided with comprehensive sexuality education to develop the knowledge and skills they need to protect their health throughout their lives. Such education can be provided by schools and in communities and combined with skills training and promotion of human rights and gender equality. Creative solutions to raise coverage of interventions such as iron-folate supplementation for girls and women of childbearing age and during pregnancy must be pursued so that these interventions can be strengthened and rapidly accelerated.

E. Understanding of gender norms in informing policy design

94. For the rights of girls to be fully respected and fulfilled within society, it is essential that they not only be inscribed into legislation but also be promoted by comprehensive prevention and response mechanisms. Understanding the way gender norms affect violence, exploitation and abuse of children should be used to more directly inform the design of policies and interventions to improve the survival, development and participation of the girl child and to ensure realization of her rights.

95. Because social discrimination can impede individuals from enjoying the rights and freedoms to which they are entitled, policies do not necessarily lead to the same outcome for all people. By recognizing specific forms of discrimination and the way they intersect with gender, policies can be more specifically tailored to achieve their intended goals and accommodate girls, who might otherwise be excluded.

F. Support to empower girls to participate fully and freely

96. Research shows that providing girls with skills, knowledge, meaningful connections with others and a say in processes and decisions that affect them significantly contributes to improving their lives. As set out in general comment No. 12 (2009), it is important that accountability mechanisms be introduced and

promoted to provide appropriate information and adequate support for children to express their views in matters that affect them, as called for by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The participation of girls should be promoted by involving them in the design and delivery of development programmes intended to reach them.

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Human right to safe drinking water and sanitation

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 16/2.

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Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation

Summary

The Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, submits the present report to the General Assembly in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 16/2. She considers it imperative to introduce the human rights framework and the practical guidance it provides into policies and practice for managing wastewater and controlling pollution.

The present report starts with an explanation of the concept of wastewater and its link to human rights, an outline of the impact of water pollution on the realization of human rights, and an exploration of the interface between access to sanitation and wastewater management. It describes how households, agriculture and industry contribute to water pollution and stresses the value of integrating human rights into wastewater management and water pollution control in order to address challenges in the legislative, regulatory and institutional frameworks. The report also discusses appropriate technology choices, financing and pricing, accountability and transparency and, finally, informing the post-2015 development agenda.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly by the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 16/2. The Special Rapporteur devotes the report to the issue of managing wastewater and curbing water pollution.

2. In the country missions conducted by the Special Rapporteur, the impact of water pollution is a recurring theme, involving untreated sewage and faecal sludge from septic tanks leaking into ground and surface water, through the content of pits dumped into the environment or overflowing networks, through small businesses and large industries discharging contaminated water, through agricultural run-offs contaminated with pesticides and fertilizers, as well as uncontrolled urban run-off. Moreover, a range of cases detailing the impacts of extractive industries, in particular on water quality, have been brought to her attention. The lack of adequate wastewater management and pollution control can have significant impact on public health and the environment. The Special Rapporteur finds that disadvantaged communities are the worst affected, with negative impacts on the lives, livelihoods, health and the realization of the human rights of their members.

3. The present report seeks to consider those issues in a comprehensive manner by introducing the human rights framework into broader considerations of wastewater management and ensuring water quality. Despite declared intentions to integrate wastewater management into overall water management frameworks, water management has been given priority by policymakers, with neglect for wastewater. Compared to water availability, scarcity and allocation, water quality has received relatively limited attention in the context of water management. Wastewater policies lag far behind, implementation and monitoring of which often fail.

4. Human rights provide practical guidance in managing wastewater and controlling water pollution. They offer a flexible framework that demands that States prioritize addressing the most urgent and serious impacts on human rights, whether they stem from domestic, industrial or agricultural water contamination. They call for a phased approach to progressive improvements in managing wastewater and controlling pollution, as illustrated by the concept of a wastewater ladder. Human rights call for a shift in priorities that would require States to focus on improving the lives and livelihoods of the most disadvantaged, those who are usually worst affected by contamination. Such a shift requires that greater attention be paid to the safe disposal and management of faecal sludge and septage, issues which are currently largely neglected in policy and practice. It also requires placing higher priority on finding solutions in informal settlements that are faced with the cumulative challenges of population density, lack of formal land tenure, contaminated environments and lack of infrastructure and services.

5. One of the reasons why the Special Rapporteur considers the present report very timely is the ongoing process to elaborate the post-2015 development agenda, including sustainable development goals. The Special Rapporteur considers it mandatory to integrate human rights holistically into the future development agenda.

6. To inform her views on the issue, the Special Rapporteur has engaged in a broad consultative process, including an expert consultation held in April 2013. The Special Rapporteur also received close to 40 written submissions (available from

www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/WaterAndSanitation/SRWater/Pages/ContributionsWasteWater). This process has provided her with valuable guidance, and she is grateful to all those who contributed.

7. The section below contains an explanation of the concept of wastewater, outlines the impact of water pollution on the realization of human rights, and explores the interface between access to sanitation and wastewater management. Section III describes how households, agriculture and industry contribute to water pollution. Section IV describes how human rights can be integrated into wastewater management and water pollution control.

II. Setting the scene

A. Concept of wastewater

8. Wastewater can be defined as "a combination of one or more of: domestic effluent consisting of blackwater (excreta, urine and faecal sludge) and greywater (kitchen and bathing wastewater); water from commercial establishments and institutions, including hospitals; industrial effluent, stormwater and other urban run-off; and agricultural, horticultural and aquaculture effluent, either dissolved or as suspended matter".[1] Wastewater contains pathogens, heavy metals, chemical contaminants such as acids, but it also contains valuable nutrients.[2]

9. Wastewater should be understood to include not just sewage, but also faecal sludge and septage originating from pit latrines and septic tanks.[3] Finding the appropriate terminology to cover all those types of wastewater is difficult, and an all-encompassing neutral term is yet to be found. However, in following the definition of wastewater as it is emerging in the sector, and seeing the need for a term that encompasses all forms of sewage, sludge and septage, the Special Rapporteur will use this broad understanding of the term "wastewater".

10. Wastewater should not be seen as "waste" without further use. When properly treated,[4] it can be reused for industrial cooling and processing, irrigation in agriculture, parks, and horticulture, and even drinking purposes.[5] Wastewater also contains many resources that can be recovered, such as nutrients and organic matter.

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[1] United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations Human Settlements Programme, *Sick Water: the central role of wastewater management in sustainable development* (2010), p. 15.

[2] UN-Water, background discussion paper on wastewater and water quality targets and indicators (2013) (unpublished), p. 9.

[3] Economic Commission for Europe and UN-Water, "The Wastewater and Water Quality Framing Paper, p. 3 (2013).

[4] Akiça Bahri, "Managing the other side of the water cycle: Making wastewater an asset", p. 32 (Mölnlycke, Sweden, Global Water Partnership Technical Committee Background Paper No. 13, 2009).

[5] UN-Habitat, *Global atlas of excreta, wastewater sludge, and biosolids management: Moving forward the sustainable and welcome use of a global resource*, p. 26 (Nairobi, 2008).

B. Increasing water pollution and continuing exposure, and their impact on human rights

11. Exposure to faeces and wastewater is a reality that many individuals face. Effects range from ill-health to hampering education and work. Global processes of change, including population growth, but more importantly, economic growth, changing lifestyles and diets, and urbanization will further increase the demand for water and produce growing volumes of wastewater. An estimated 1,500 km^3 of wastewater are generated worldwide per year,[6] which corresponds roughly to the volume of over 300,000 Maracanã football stadiums filled with wastewater up to the top. It is estimated that more than 80 per cent of all wastewater generated worldwide is not treated.[7]

12. Looking at on-site sanitation solutions, faecal sludge and septage are all too often not confined and treated, while not even included in the aforementioned figures. Faecal sludge, the management of which is often overlooked, if not ignored, presents a major health hazard, especially in urban areas. Designated disposal or treatment sites for faecal sludge often are lacking or are dysfunctional. After pits or tanks have been emptied, sludge is often dumped in the vicinity of peoples' dwellings, and hence remains a major health hazard.

13. Water safety is a central component of the human right to water, and large volumes of unmanaged wastewater compromise the availability of safe water. Water pollution also endangers other human rights. Unmanaged wastewater constitutes a hazard for both the environment and human health, the two being closely interlinked, as damage to the integrity of the ecosystem inevitably has an impact on human health and well-being. Dead zones are spreading in oceans and lakes, and many groundwater reservoirs have become polluted beyond remediation, thereby threatening the livelihoods of people relying on ecosystem services.

14. Water-related diseases make up a large part of the global disease burden, with more people dying as a result of polluted water than are killed in wars and other forms of violence.[8] Many so-called water-related diseases are in fact faeces-related diseases, which transmitted through contact with or ingestion of water contaminated with faeces.[9]

15. It is difficult to determine what share of the disease burden and other negative impacts can be attributed to inadequate wastewater management and water contamination. Many public health benefits are derived from access to sanitation, avoidance of direct contact with human excreta and improvement of hygienic practice. However, where wastewater is not even confined and people are exposed to pathogens, lack of wastewater management has negative impacts. Conversely, an increase in the level of wastewater management has been shown to result in public

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[6] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *United Nations World Water Development Report, Water for People, Water for Life*, p. 87 (Paris, 2003).

[7] UNESCO, *United Nations World Water Development Report, managing water under uncertainty and risk*, p. 66 (fourth edition) (Paris, 2012).

[8] *Sick Water*, p. 5.

[9] Maggie Black and Ben Fawcett, *The Last Taboo: Opening the Door on the Global Sanitation Crisis*, p. 72 (London, Earthscan, 2008).

health benefits such as reductions in disease mortality independent from income levels and access to sanitation.[10]

16. Large-scale contamination sometimes has visible direct impacts, but more frequently the impacts of inadequate wastewater management and water pollution are invisible and become manifest only in the long term. They affect not only the surrounding communities, but also those communities that are downstream from the source of pollution, resulting in an out-of-sight, out-of-mind phenomenon. Yet, pathogens in sewage and other contaminants cause a range of diseases, either through contamination of drinking water, through direct contact or through their entry into the food chain. Inadequate wastewater management restricts development, threatens livelihoods and increases poverty as a result of increased costs of health care as well as reduced productivity and educational opportunities.

17. Despite those negative impacts, it has sometimes been argued that development inevitably results in pollution and that developing countries have the right to pursue a path of development that includes pollution. However, the pursuit of economic development must not lead to violations of human rights, and the right to development cannot be invoked to justify violations of the human right to water or other human rights. Instead, development must be sustainable, balancing economic, environmental and social interests. In the case of *Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum v. Union of India*,[11] which dealt with untreated effluent discharged by tanneries, the Supreme Court of India underlined the importance of reconciling those interests. It acknowledged that the industry, which was generating foreign exchange and providing employment opportunities, was of vital importance, but stressed that the economy must not destroy the ecology, nor should it constitute a hazard to human health.

18. Others have argued that people themselves should decide whether to prioritize wastewater management and how to allocate scarce resources. While it is certainly true that communities themselves should make decisions in a participatory manner, this line of argument overlooks the fact that apart from one's own human rights, one person's lack of wastewater management mostly affects other people's livelihoods and health. Whether or not to manage wastewater is not just a personal or community choice, but is a collective problem. In terms of participation, this issue points to the need to involve all those concerned in decision-making, i.e., communities living downstream and others affected by wastewater. On the part of the State, respect for human rights imposes an obligation to protect, which requires States to shield people from human rights abuses through the actions of non-State actors, including other individuals. The fact that one person gains access to sanitation must not be to the detriment of others through exposing them to the former person's faeces.

19. Hence, the question that is sometimes brought up — whether people have a right to have their wastewater treated — may not be the main issue. What is more relevant is that others have the right to not to be exposed to the negative impacts of unmanaged wastewater. This is all the more true because not everyone is affected to the same extent. Individuals and communities that are marginalized, for instance people

[10] Kartiki S. Naik and Michael K. Stanstrom, "Evidence of the influence of wastewater treatment on improved public health", International Association on Water Pollution Research, *Water, Science and Technology Journal*, Vol. 66, Issue 3 (London, Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[11] Supreme Court of India, *Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum v. Union of India*, 28 August 1996 [1996], All India Reporter 2715.

living in informal settlements, find their human rights are compromised much more often than do others. Such informal settlements are often situated along riverbanks or low-lying land where polluted water tends to accumulate. Dwellers are thereby exposed to contamination, especially when they use polluted water for drinking.

C. From access to sanitation to wastewater management

20. In 2010, the human right to water and sanitation was explicitly recognized by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, and is guaranteed as a component of the human right to an adequate standard of living. The Special Rapporteur, in her capacity as an independent expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, defined sanitation from a human rights perspective as a system for the collection, transport, treatment and disposal or reuse of human excreta and associated hygiene. The Special Rapporteur has stated that States must ensure without discrimination that everyone has physical and economic access to sanitation, in all spheres of life, which is safe, hygienic, secure, socially and culturally acceptable, provides privacy and ensures dignity. She further considers that domestic wastewater, which flows from toilets, sinks and showers, should be included in the description of sanitation insofar as water regularly contains human excreta and the by-products of the associated hygiene (see A/HRC/12/24, paras. 63 and 87). The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights endorsed this definition at its forty-fifth session in its statement on the right to sanitation. (E/C.12/2010/1).

21. Human rights bodies thus understand sanitation broadly to include the treatment and disposal or reuse of excreta and associated wastewater. Sanitation does not stop simply with the use of latrines or toilets, but includes the safe disposal or reuse of faeces, urine and wastewater. Such a broad understanding is warranted, as sanitation concerns not only one's own right to use a latrine or toilet, but also the rights of other people, in particular their right to health, on which there might be negative impacts.

22. In a similar vein, the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, at a briefing in January 2013 calling for a post-2015 global goal on water, stated that for citizens and countries to enjoy the health benefits, economic growth and human dignity that comes with safe sanitation and clean water, a holistic approach that incorporating wastewater collection, treatment and reuse is necessary (available from www.unsgab.org/content/documents/UNSGABpost2015brief.pdf).

23. Moving beyond the direct link to sanitation and wastewater from households, the Special Rapporteur sees the need to consider wastewater from other sources, including the industrial and agricultural sectors, because contamination from those sources has a significant impact on water quality, and the impact of domestic wastewater cannot be considered in isolation. As long as wastewater is generated, whether it be from agriculture, industry, or settlements, and is not confined and appropriately treated, human rights will be at risk of being violated.

24. However, such a broad understanding is not always commonplace; for instance, it is not found in the Millennium Development Goals. The Goals have

focused attention on improving access to sanitation facilities,[12] while far less attention is devoted to the collection and treatment of waste. In a report to the General Assembly on the human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, the Special Rapporteur noted that the definition of "improved" sanitation does not cover the proper discharge, treatment or reuse of human waste, and that as far as the water target was concerned, even though the target itself calls for access to drinking water that is safe, the way this is measured does not fully capture the dimension of water quality. She also noted that the accompanying indicator looks at "improved" water sources based on types of technology, which does not necessarily guarantee that water from improved sources is actually safe (see A/65/254, paras. 24 and 25).

25. Estimates show that sanitation coverage would be significantly lower if sewage treatment were taken into account as an additional criterion: according to that definition, 4.1 billion people lack access to sanitation.[13] The coverage rate may decrease even further when considering other types of sanitation facilities, such as pit latrines, and discounting of those that expose communities to harmful substances when pits are not adequately emptied and their content treated.[14] Similarly, when water safety is added into the equation, the number of people with access to safe drinking water has to be adjusted downward, with an estimated 1.8 billion people using unsafe water.[15]

26. Recent developments indicate that the understanding of the importance of wastewater management is on the rise. In 2010, the General Assembly adopted resolution 65/153, which encouraged all States to approach the sanitation issue in a much broader context and encompass all its aspects, including wastewater treatment and reuse. Moreover, the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (see General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex), stresses the need to adopt measures to significantly reduce water pollution and increase water quality and significantly improve wastewater treatment. Most recently, the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda included in its report on a new global partnership for the eradication of poverty and the transformation of economies through sustainable development the recycling or treatment of wastewater as a target under its illustrative goal on access to water.[16]

27. While ensuring access to sanitation facilities is a significant step that will bring huge gains in terms of privacy and dignity, the health gains will materialize fully only when human excreta are properly confined, disposed of and managed.

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[12] Malcolm Langford and Inga T. Winkler, "Quantifying Water and Sanitation in Development Cooperation: Power or Perversity?", available from http://harvardfxbcenter.org/files/2013/06/Goal-7_Langford-and-Winkler_Final_linked1.pdf.

[13] Rachel Baum, Jeanne Luh and J. Bartram, "Sanitation: A Global Estimate of Sewerage Connections without Treatment and the Resulting Impact on MDG Progress", 1998, Water Institute, University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, 2013).

[14] Ibid., p. 2,000.

[15] K. Onda, J. LoBuglio and J. Bartram, "Global Access to Safe Water: Accounting for Water Quality and the Resulting Impact on MDG Progress", *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 9, issue 3, pp. 880-894, Water Institute, University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, 2012).

[16] Report of the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, p. 42 (available from http://www.post-2015hlp.org/the-report/).

Lessons learned from experiences in community-led total sanitation demonstrate how important it is for communities to be entirely open-defecation-free. As long as faeces are still found in the community environment, risks to health will remain (see www.communityledtotalsanitation.org). The same holds true when wastewater ends up in the nearby or larger environment: the community, or other communities living downstream, can be negatively affected. Not dealing with emptying, disposing of and treating sludge puts at risk the benefits of increased sanitation coverage.[17]

28. The Special Rapporteur wishes to emphasize the fact that she does not call for efforts to be diverted away from ensuring access to sanitation, which must remain a priority. She has repeatedly stressed the crucial role of adequate sanitation in ensuring human health, privacy and dignity. At the same time, she considers that efforts need to go beyond ensuring access to basic sanitation, in particular in countries that have already achieved (almost) universal coverage, but lack adequate wastewater management. The imperative of wastewater management and pollution control is even more apparent for contamination stemming from large-scale agriculture and industry.

29. Calling for increased attention to wastewater management from a human rights perspective does not necessarily imply that everyone should be connected to sewage treatment, nor that adequate wastewater management must be achieved overnight. The human rights framework calls for measures and technologies that are appropriate for a given context, including on-site sanitation solutions, and requires such measures to be taken progressively to achieve phased progress illustrated by the concept of a wastewater ladder.

III. Contamination from different sources

A. Wastewater from households

30. Increasing water consumption also means increasing discharge of wastewater. The confinement, transport and treatment of excreta and associated wastewater are highly problematic in many urban agglomerations. Owing to the sheer quantities of wastewater and densities in urban areas resulting in less space to discharge waste safely, the impact of water pollution from domestic sources tends to be more pronounced in urban than in rural areas.

31. Domestic wastewater management starts from an array of technological solutions, including dry toilets, pit latrines or septic tanks, and single flush or conventional flush toilets as well as basins, roof and yard drains. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, septic tanks are estimated to represent roughly 25 per cent of all urban sanitation facilities, while pit latrines serve another 50 per cent.[18] Although a large proportion of the global population does not use flush toilets, attention of decision makers is often on these, together with piped networks of sewers and sewage treatment plants. Policies for the collection and treatment of

[17] A. Opel, "Challenge critical: absence of faecal sludge management shatters the gains of improved sanitation coverage in Bangladesh", Second Faecal Sludge Management Conference (Durban, South Africa, 2012).

[18] M. Kjellén and others, "Global Review of Sanitation System Trends and Interactions with Menstrual Management Practices", p. 4 (Stockholm, Stockholm Environment Institute (2012)).

faecal sludge and septage lag far behind, although they offer huge health and environmental benefits at much lower costs than sewer networks.

32. During her country missions, the Special Rapporteur has constantly witnessed challenges in the operation and management of septic tanks and the disposal of septage, giving rise to severe challenges for the realization of human rights.[19] On-site sanitation solutions have been promoted as a way for people to quickly "gain access to sanitation" without giving due regard to what happens when pits fill up. Often, tanks are not properly maintained and pollutants leak into groundwater and environment, impairing the health of neighbouring residents or those depending on shallow aquifers. Once the tanks are full, they need to be emptied. This process of emptying, collection and transportation usually lacks regulation, control and accountability, resulting in contents being dumped by collection trucks relatively close by, into waterways or the larger environment, adjacent to locations where people live, farm, fish or work. Trucks serving a given municipality are often not sufficient to meet the demand. Moreover, poor households, in order to avoid periodically hiring unaffordable trucks, might divert the water overflowing from their tanks leading to continued exposure and health risks.

33. Another largely ignored area is the collection and management of greywater as well as stormwater. The latter frequently contains much higher levels of pollution than commonly assumed so that more efforts are needed to integrate stormwater into wastewater management. The associated challenges are exacerbated during times of flooding. The Constitutional Chamber of Costa Rica found that poorly maintained sewage systems, which contributed to the flooding of households with wastewater during periods of heavy rainfall, violated the right to health.[20]

34. Where a sewer system does exist, treatment of wastewater does not necessarily take place before it is discharged into bodies of water. In some cases, only part of the sewer system may be connected to a wastewater treatment plant, whereas the rest is discharged into watercourses without treatment. Even when connected to a treatment plant, this does not always guarantee continuous and sufficient treatment (see A/HRC/12/24/Add.1, para. 73). The reasons for those failures are manifold, but they all boil down to the low priority afforded to wastewater management or to the advancement of solutions that are inappropriate in a given context. Treatment plants are often underdimensioned with far more connections to the sewer network than the capacity of the plants would allow for (see report on mission to Bangladesh, A/HRC/15/55, para. 58). In many instances, connections are ineffectively controlled and regulated, with illicit connections adding to the strain of the system (see A/HRC/12/24/Add.1, para. 73). Numerous anecdotes point to the construction of "white elephants", large-scale projects that are not designed for local conditions characterized by a combination of inappropriate scale, inappropriate location, and/or inappropriate technology.[21] Such plants often fail to operate after short periods of time. In addition to such large-scale failures, decaying, outdated and dysfunctional

[19] See reports on missions to: Egypt, A/HRC/15/31/Add.3, paras. 20, 41, 42, 52; Costa Rica, A/HRC/12/24/Add.1, para. 38; Uruguay, A/HRC/21/42/Add.2, para. 35; Kiribati, A/HRC/24/44/Add.1, 2013, paras. 30, 34; Tuvalu, A/HRC/24/44/Add.2, paras. 14, 26, 27; and Thailand, A/HRC/24/44/Add.3, paras. 45, 47.

[20] Decisions No. 11796 of 17 August 2007 and No. 17007 of 21 November 2007.

[21] Sick Water, p. 60.

infrastructure is common owing to the neglect of the need for operation and maintenance (see A/HRC/24/44, paras. 4, 14, 16 and 22).

B. Contamination from agriculture

35. Agriculture is the largest water user, accounting for about 70 per cent of global water use, hence producing significant amounts of water polluted with pesticides and fertilizers. It contributes to water pollution mainly as a non-point polluter: residues of agricultural production percolate to groundwater aquifers and streams in a manner that is extremely difficult to trace, quantify or regulate.[22] Moreover, livestock rearing poses problems in terms of the disposal of faeces and urine high in nitrate and phosphate, and partly pharmaceuticals. The Special Rapporteur found in Costa Rica that the use of certain pesticides used in large-scale plantations has been associated with cancer when leaching into groundwater (see A/HRC/12/24/Add.1, para. 44). As in other sectors, patterns of inequalities emerge: in one country, research revealed that communities housing high proportions of minority residents are more likely to rely on water that has high levels of nitrates.[23] Such pollution directly endangers the health of water users or indirectly threatens their livelihoods and food supplies through the destruction of ecosystem services.

C. Industrial water pollution

36. Industry is estimated to dispose of 300 million to 400 million tons (the weight of the entire human population) of heavy metals, solvents, toxic sludge and other waste into water bodies every year.[24] Industries that generate large amounts of waste include mining, pulp mills, tanneries, sugar refineries and pharmaceuticals.[25] Mostly, industry is a point polluter, which in theory is easier to control and regulate. However, it includes discharge from small-scale, partly informal industries, which might be difficult to regulate in practice. In total, approximately 70 per cent of industrial wastewater in developing countries remains untreated.[26]

37. Water pollution can endanger access to safe drinking or irrigation water of downstream users. Heavy metals also enter the food chain, thus putting at risk the human rights to food and to health.[27] Often, water pollution concerns poorer communities much more than others, as lack of infrastructure forces them to use unsafe sources. In one city, wells and boreholes used by residents of a lower middle class area have been shown to be polluted by cadmium and lead, with concomitant health risks of cancer and kidney damage.[28]

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[22] Background discussion paper on wastewater, p. 5.

[23] Carolina Balazs and others, "Social Disparities in Nitrate-Contaminated Drinking Water in California's San Joaquin Valley", *Environmental Health Perspectives*, vol. 119, No. 9.

[24] World Water Assessment Programme Water and Industry (2010).

[25] Background discussion paper on wastewater.

[26] UNESCO, *United Nations World Water Development Report* (third edition) (Paris, 2009).

[27] Ibid., p. 139.

[28] M. A. Momodu and C. A. Anyakora, "Heavy metal contamination of ground water: the Surulere case study", Research Journal Environmental and Earth Sciences, 2(1), pp. 39-43, University of Lagos, Research Journal Environmental and Earth Sciences (2010).

38. Polluting industries frequently expand into areas in which disadvantaged populations, such as indigenous communities, reside, and such populations bear the brunt of the ill effects of industrial water pollution, including health problems and the disruption of traditional livelihoods (see A/HRC/18/35, paras. 30-36). For instance, oil operations have an impact on water quality, drinking water often being contaminated through oil spills, for example in the Niger Delta, where the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights found spills and that the resulting pollution brought about devastating effects on human health and livelihoods.[29] Such contamination often goes hand in hand with disrespect for the human rights principles of meaningful participation, and free, prior and informed consent (see A/HRC/18/35, para. 47).

39. The mining sector poses particular challenges. The Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes explained in a report that no other resource is more affected by the extent and level of degradation of quality and quantity owing to unsound management of hazardous substances and waste from extractive industries than water. Substances seep, leech and drain into water systems, contaminating not only the water reservoirs of the population living in the immediate area around the mine, but also of communities living hundreds of kilometres downstream (see A/HRC/21/48, para. 39).

40. Once valuable materials have been extracted, mine tailings can cause severe water pollution with sometimes devastating results when tailing facilities fail (ibid., para. 17). Mining waste has also been disposed of directly into watercourses (ibid., para. 11). Most seriously, water resources can be affected by acid drainage resulting from the decomposition of minerals triggered by mining activities. The legacy of acid drainage can continue for centuries long after the mine has been closed which results in water quality problems, with no current owner of the mine who can be held directly accountable.

41. Activities of the fossil fuel industry to recover shale gas and other unconventional reservoirs have increased through the use of hydraulic fracturing (or fracking), in which a mix of water and chemicals is injected at high pressure into a well to extract underground resources, such as oil, natural gas and geothermal energy. Both wells and pits are very likely to have ecological impacts, including the pollution of groundwater aquifers and contamination of drinking water (see report on mission to the United States, A/HRC/18/33/Add.4, paras. 43-46). From the point of view of human rights, largely unanswered questions arise concerning health and safety.

IV. Integrating human rights in wastewater management and water pollution control

42. The challenges arising from contamination call for concerted efforts to achieve sustainable wastewater management and pollution control based on human rights.

[29] African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Decision 155/96, taken at the eighteenth ordinary session, in 2001 (ACHPR/COMM/A044/1659, para. 68).

A. Sound legislative, regulatory and institutional frameworks

43. Wastewater management takes place at different levels of government, which interact and overlap. While legislative and policy frameworks are frequently drawn up at the national level, it might be incumbent on local governments to implement them. Also, wastewater is not always a matter of the federal State. Balancing decentralization and central coordination is a major task. Even at the national level, wastewater management tends to be fragmented across different ministries and departments, including health, environment, infrastructure and agriculture, among others.

44. Moreover, wastewater management concerns a host of different actors. Apart from Government actors, international organizations and donors, the private sector and civil society contribute to wastewater management, and coordination is not always ensured. The obligation of States to protect human rights and regulate the activities of third parties as well as the responsibilities of non-State actors therefore come more and more to the fore (see Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (A/HRC/17/31)).

1. Devising appropriate legal frameworks, policies and strategies

45. Water and wastewater are governed by an extensive web of water law and policy, ranging from international to national law, policies, and decrees to local rules and customary law. Water flows across territorial boundaries; hence, its governance also needs to extend beyond national boundaries. Among existing instruments, the 1997 Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses must be noted. While the convention has not yet entered into force, it represents a codification of customary international law to a large extent. Article 7 requires States to take all appropriate measures to prevent the causing of significant harm to other States sharing an international watercourse.

46. The human rights perspective strengthens those obligations. The Maastricht Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations of States in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, recently adopted by a group of experts in international law and human rights, underscore the obligation of States to avoid causing harm extraterritorially, stipulating that States must desist from acts and omissions that create a real risk of nullifying or impairing the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights extraterritorially.[30] The principles also affirm the obligation of States to protect human rights extraterritorially,[31] i.e., to take necessary measures to ensure that non-State actors do not nullify or impair the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.[32] This translates into an obligation to avoid contamination of watercourses in other jurisdictions and to regulate non-State actors accordingly.

47. At the national level, legal frameworks have resulted in vastly different outcomes. On the one hand, they may entrench existing power structures and inequalities or may protect traditional water rights. Integrating human rights requires the reform of relevant water and wastewater law and policy frameworks. What is often

[30] Maastricht Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2011), Principle 13, available from http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/Institutes/MaastrichtCentreForHumanRights/MaastrichtETOPrinciples.htm.

[31] Ibid., Principle 23.

[32] Ibid., Principle 24.

lacking is an efficient framework to deal with faecal sludge management. The same holds true for regulating diffuse pollution.

2. Strong regulation and regulators combined with incentives

48. To curb water pollution effectively, regulation must target all sectors and cover the whole country, giving priority to the elimination of the most urgent and serious challenges, which vary from country to country and within countries. They might stem from the use of pesticides and fertilizers in agriculture in rural areas, the non-confinement and non-treatment of sludge and septage in densely populated urban areas, or from industrial wastewater in areas that experience sudden economic growth. States have to assess the situation at the microlevel and prioritize addressing the most urgent challenges.

49. Regulations must aim both at managing wastewater to reduce the impact of pollution as well as preventing pollution. Regulation can set standards with numerical limits for certain substances or entirely ban particularly dangerous substances. It can also foresee the issuance of permits for discharges of a certain volume and quality. Regulation can, and must, set standards for improving the collection, treatment and reuse of wastewater, while incorporating sludge management. The precautionary principle must be enshrined with regard to water pollution threats, which are not well understood but have the potential to endanger human rights. Another approach, which is used to ensure that drinking water is not contaminated, is to establish safeguard zones. Many European countries have done so based on the European Water Policy Framework Directive.[33] Such zones usually impose limitations on certain activities, such as agriculture and tourism, among others.

50. Looking at households, some countries make it mandatory to connect to sewage lines, where they are available (see A/HRC/21/42/Add.2, para. 18). In countries with extensive sewerage networks, this may be a feasible measure, but it requires ensuring that connections are affordable even for people living in poverty, for instance, through the targeted use of subsidies. Often, challenges remain in that regard.

51. One of the biggest incentives for improved wastewater management is the increasing understanding that wastewater is a resource.[34] In the agricultural sector, an estimated area of between 4 million and 20 million ha worldwide (i.e., the surface area of Switzerland and Senegal, respectively) is irrigated with wastewater or fertilized by sludge.[35] While this use is welcome, when the use is unregulated, it exposes producers, residents and consumers to health risks.[36] Therefore, the risks and benefits of irrigation with wastewater need to be balanced. The Guidelines on the Safe Use of Wastewater, Excreta and Greywater in Agriculture and Aquaculture[37] provide useful standards. In Namibia, the Special Rapporteur witnessed efforts to treat wastewater to the standard of drinking water (see A/HRC/21/42/Add.3, para. 15).

52. Frameworks must include fines and penalties as a way of enforcement. In cases of serious breaches, countries may also turn to criminal law. Finally,

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[33] Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

[34] See, e.g., Valentina Lazarova and others (eds.), "Milestones in Water Reuse", IWA Publishing.

[35] B. Jiménez and others, "Wastewater, sludge and excreta use in developing countries", in P. Drechsel and others (eds.), "Wastewater irrigation and health", pp. 3-28.

[36] *Global atlas of excreta*, pp. 32 and 33.

[37] World Health Organization, Guidelines for the Safe Use of Wastewater, Excreta and Greywater (vol. 4).

successful regulation depends not only on standard-setting, but also on strong independent regulators. Currently, most agencies are underfunded and poorly trained, which demonstrates an urgent need for improvement. Regulators need to have the capacity, in terms of human resources, skills, funding and independence from interference, to monitor whether regulations are being complied with, carry out on-site inspections, and impose fines and penalties in the case of breaches.

3. Making institutions work in the public interest

53. Water and wastewater management is often entrusted to large and powerful "hydrocracies"[38] that are trained for, and have vested interests in, large infrastructure. Many administrations and funding agencies favour sewer networks and sewage treatment plants over more decentralized systems. Such preferences should be contrasted with the institutional framework for faecal sludge management: often there are no clear institutional responsibilities for wastewater management beyond sewerage networks.[39] This gap is exacerbated in informal settlements that lack legal land tenure, which, where sanitation facilities exist at all, tend to be served largely by septic tanks and pit latrines. Municipalities often deliberately avoid providing formal services in those areas because they fear legitimizing informal settlements. Legislative frameworks must assign institutional responsibilities for wastewater and, more specifically, faecal sludge management. The challenges in informal settlements are among the most urgent. As a short-term solution, non-governmental organizations have acted as intermediaries between municipalities and users to allow people to gain access to services before a more long-term solution is found.

54. In other instances, the institutional frameworks exist and assign responsibilities to municipalities, but they lack endowment with financial, technical and human resources. As such, delegation results in dispersal of effort and inaction. Therefore, institutional decentralization must be accompanied by necessary budgets and capacity. States must ensure that local authorities have the necessary financial, human and other resources to discharge their duties effectively. More broadly, institutional development and capacity-building are essential to ensure that laws and policies can be implemented and enforced.

55. Corruption is a significant challenge, whether in the context of large investments and contracts that are prone to benefit-reaping corrupt behaviour or in the context of small-scale entrepreneurs, for instance those emptying pits and tanks, where bribes have sometimes become commonplace. It is estimated that curbing corruption could lower investment requirements by 20-70 per cent.[40] Widespread corruption raises the question as to whether States are spending their maximum available resources on realizing human rights and using resources efficiently. Moreover, concerns arise about the affordability of services. Carefully designed subsidy schemes might lose their meaning when people have to pay additional bribes to gain access. The human rights framework contributes to preventing and

[38] C. Molle, P. P. Mollinga and P. Webster, "Hydraulic bureaucracies and the hydraulic mission: flows of water, flows of power", pp. 328-349, *Water Alternatives*, 2 (2009) 3.

[39] A. Zimmer, "Everyday governance of the waste waterscapes. A Foucauldian analysis in Delhi's informal settlements", pp. 194 and 195 (Bonn, Universitäts-und Landesbibliothek, 2012).

[40] *United Nations World Water Development Report* (third edition), p. 70 (Paris, 2009).

combating corruption through strengthening participation, providing access to information and through transparency and accountability.

4. Ensuring participation

56. Policymakers often have little experience in working with the populations concerned, which makes participation difficult. All too often, participation is understood as a mere "tick-the-box exercise". Yet, access to information, transparency and participation are key for realizing human rights and for ensuring the sustainability of services.

57. All people and stakeholders concerned must be given opportunities to participate in decision-making about wastewater management. The human rights perspective stipulates important requirements to involve not just those for whom wastewater infrastructure is built, but also those on whom the lack of wastewater treatment will have an impact. People should influence decision-making on types of facilities and systems, priorities in allocation of resources and approval of large-scale projects, among many other issues. Participation in conducting impact assessments as outlined below is essential. While certain aspects of wastewater management require technical expertise, such inputs must be balanced with the needs and preferences of people.

B. Contextualized measures and technologies

58. Human rights do not prescribe technology or management choices, but appropriate options can contribute in significant ways to their realization. What is appropriate depends on context — whether conventional, simplified, condominial, centralized or decentralized sewage systems, or on-site sanitation solutions with adequate septage disposal and management. While population growth and urbanization leads to challenges in many parts of the world, areas facing population decline require different approaches. In Japan, infrastructure is being adapted to decreasing demand and is being downsized accordingly (see A/HRC/18/33/Add.3, para. 20).

59. From a human rights perspective, the priority is to start where exposure is the greatest, instead of further improving services where basic treatment standards are already respected. Ever larger investments in sophisticated sewage treatment plants are not a priority. Rather, efficient confinement and treatment of septage and sludge, and the eradication of open defecation need to be prioritized.

60. A phased approach can be illustrated by the "wastewater ladder",[41] which allows for gradual improvements of collection and treatment standards in line with the obligation of States to progressively realize human rights. The principle of progressive realization implies that the full realization of human rights cannot be achieved immediately, while obliging States to move as expeditiously and effectively as possible towards the goal of full realization.

61. Technically, wastewater treatment is possible to almost any standard. However, water of extremely high quality is required only for drinking or certain human uses; other livelihood activities and certain industrial and agricultural uses can do with

[41] Background discussion paper on wastewater, p. 24.

water of lower quality. This allows for a phased approach to wastewater management, as even preliminary or primary treatment can bring significant benefits. The PRODES programme in Brazil provides an interesting example in this context. It starts by stipulating a minimum requirement for primary treatment and continues with increasing standards, determined according to the specific context (see www.ana.gov.br/prodes/).

62. Rather than replicate the sewer plus sewage treatment plant model under all circumstances, the use of low-cost, flexible technologies should be considered where appropriate. Too often sewer lines are laid without the appropriate end-of-pipe treatment facility. Equally, sewage treatment plants are built without sufficient planning for the sewage to reach them. Decentralized sanitation options might show benefits from the perspective of human rights in terms of increased options to participate in decision-making and lower costs, thereby enhancing opportunities to extend services to all.

63. Many options exist to improve on-site sanitation and recycle human waste, especially in rural areas. However, it is crucial to also find solutions for densely populated informal settlements in urban areas. Not only do pits and septic tanks need to be emptied, but also their contents must be properly disposed of or reused. Many traditional wastewater treatment plants cannot deal with sludge, so other solutions, for instance reuse for energy production or fertilizer, can be promoted. Alternatively, processes for treating sludge can be made available at existing or new treatment plants. In South Africa, eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality turned its attention to the challenge of full and overflowing latrines and put into place a programme to empty latrines every five years at no cost to the household (see www.durban.gov.za/City_Services/water_sanitation/Policies_Plans_Guidelines/Pages/Water_Services_Development_Plan.aspx). In Japan, the johkasou system, which combines a septic tank with the on-site treatment of septage has been developed (see A/HRC/18/33/Add.3, para. 15).

64. It is important that measures be taken not only to build new facilities, but also to meet the challenges of coping with dysfunctional infrastructure. It is crucial that measures are taken to ensure operation and maintenance.

C. Financing and pricing in line with human rights

65. Investing in wastewater management is closely tied to technological choices, although financing needs are not limited to infrastructure, but encompass management, monitoring, policy development, capacity-building, awareness-raising and enforcement, among others. Different estimates exist as to the sums required to retrofit the world's population with modern infrastructure and take care of decaying infrastructure in industrialized countries. Figures range from $75 billion to $904 billion per year over the next 25 to 42 years, but the reliability of those numbers is questionable.[42] In any case, the sums needed are astronomical.

66. While there is scope for increasing wastewater charges in many areas, removing subsidies for industries and agriculture and introducing the "polluter pays" principle more stringently, it is unlikely that the necessary sums can be fully recovered from users. In many countries, wastewater management is still financed

[42] Ibid., p. 10.

through budget allocations or donor support. The Special Rapporteur has previously called for resource allocation to the sector to be increased (see A/66/255, paras. 11 and 12).

67. Just as important as the absolute amount of resources is how those resources are targeted. The priority must be to achieve basic levels of service for everyone before moving to higher standards, in particular by targeting the most disadvantaged. Current spending patterns are not always aligned with those priorities, and often benefit those who are relatively well-off (ibid., paras. 41 and 42). Funding is disproportionately targeted towards large systems in urban areas (e.g., wastewater treatment facilities and sewerage pipelines) compared with basic services in rural areas and deprived urban areas (e.g., latrines, boreholes and hand pumps). Currently, 62 per cent of all sectoral aid goes to developing large systems, while only 16 per cent goes to basic systems.[43] Because of the limited reach and high costs associated with sewerage systems, very few people benefit from them, and the ones who do are likely to be the better-off. In order to eliminate inequalities, financing less cost-intensive and more context-appropriate systems should be given higher priority, as should other approaches to prioritize coverage in poorer and marginalized areas.

68. Looking beyond the domestic sector, the "polluter pays" principle must be enforced, including the introduction of nuanced payment structures according to types of pollution and the costs of treatment. Big polluters must pay for their full share of wastewater management. For large companies, requirements to treat wastewater at source can be a useful tool to guarantee that treatment costs are internalized.

69. Another approach is levying a water conservation tax, as in Singapore (see www.pub.gov.sg/general/Pages/WaterTariff.aspx). Similarly, Costa Rica has introduced an environmental tax for discharging polluting substances in water through the adoption of a regulation based on the "polluter pays" principle (see A/HRC/12/24/Add.1, para. 60). Other countries also impose financial charges for discharges to public sewers to avoid externalization of costs. Taxes on the use of fertilizer are a means to reduce pollution in the agricultural sector.[44]

70. Finally, the costs of adequate wastewater management are certainly an issue; however, the Special Rapporteur urges policymakers to consider the costs of inaction. Remaining inactive and letting contamination continue unabated means that the huge economic benefits of reducing water pollution and associated health impacts as well as increased productivity and school attendance would not be reaped. While requiring large initial investments, the costs of prevention and treatment by far outweigh the costs of inaction in the long term.[45] Studies on the economic returns of sanitation interventions show that both septic tanks with treatment and sewerage with treatment have a positive cost-benefit ratio, for instance of about 1:4 in the Philippines.[46] Another study in Indonesia that examined

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[43] World Health Organization/UN-Water, *Global Annual Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water*, p. 30.

[44] Thomas Harter and Jay R. Lund, "Addressing Nitrate in California's Drinking Water", p. 7 (University of California, Davis, 2012).

[45] The Wastewater and Water Quality Framing Paper.

[46] World Bank, Water and Sanitation Programme, "The Economic Returns of Sanitation Interventions in the Philippines", p. 4 (Jakarta, 2011).

the impact of downstream water pollution found that the benefits of treating domestic and industrial wastewater offset the costs by a factor of 2:3.[47]

D. Strengthening transparency, accountability and compliance with human rights

71. Transparency and accountability are among the key principles of human rights. Impact assessments can serve to strengthen compliance with human rights, while accountability mechanisms are crucial for providing redress. Improving data lays the ground for better planning and monitoring.

1. Ensuring participation

72. While environmental impact assessments are carried out for certain projects, assessments that include evaluation of the impact on human rights are not undertaken as regularly. Moreover, there are many projects for which assessments are not yet commonplace, or when they are undertaken, lack transparency and community involvement with the excuse that the information is confidential.

73. When States plan projects for wastewater management or projects that may have an impact on water quality, they need to carry out impact assessments in line with human rights standards and principles. While the Special Rapporteur welcomes the fact that companies undertake impact assessments of their projects, she also sees challenges when the findings are not publicly accessible. Moreover, Government institutions need to be able to not only access such studies, but also to analyse and assess them independently, or carry out their own assessments, as the basis for determining whether licences for a given project will be granted. This requires capacity in terms of human, technical and financial resources and expert knowledge (see A/HRC/21/42/Add.2, para. 22).

74. A human rights impact assessment can be integrated within existing environmental or social impact assessments. Such assessments should be carried out both, ex-ante and ex-post, to ensure the prevention of negative impact and monitoring throughout the process. Assessments must be based on human rights standards and follow human rights principles in the process of conducting them as previously spelled out by the Special Rapporteur (see A/HRC/15/31, para. 45).

2. Providing accountability mechanisms

75. The human rights framework obliges States to put in place mechanisms to hold the relevant actors accountable. They must provide for redress mechanisms in the law and address barriers that may prevent access to justice in practice, including through measures to overcome obstacles such as prohibitive costs, language requirements, requirements of representation and geographic location of institutions. Members of the legal profession must be adequately trained in human rights law, including economic, social and cultural rights, non-discrimination law, and environmental law.

[47] "Downstream Impacts of Water Pollution in the Upper Citarum River" (West Java, Indonesia, 2011).

76. A range of accountability mechanisms can be used, not limited to the formal court system. Quasi-judicial and administrative mechanisms (including regulators) can play an important role in ensuring accountability by monitoring compliance with rights, reporting violations, and receiving complaints. Service providers should also establish grievance mechanisms or platforms to discuss user satisfaction so as to respond to complaints and concerns. The same holds true for companies whose water use has potential impacts on communities.

77. In some instances, applicants have successfully used litigation, before both national courts and international bodies. A community in Córdoba, Argentina, was affected by an overstretched sewage treatment plant that allowed raw sewage to flow into the local river. The court ordered the city both to provide the community with alternate sources of water in the short term and to reduce the contamination of the river.[48] A court in South Africa decided that a mining company was obliged to continue dealing with acid mine drainage and bear the costs for remediation even after it had sold the mine.[49] The European Committee on Social Rights found Greece in violation of the right to health owing to the country's failure to implement measures and enforce regulations to reduce the harmful impact of industrial pollution in the River Asopos.[50] The Colombian Constitutional Court ordered a pig farm that caused pollution to stop operations based on the applicants' right to health.[51]

3. Improving the data situation

78. Reliable and adequate data provides the basis for planning, monitoring and accountability. However, water quality is not sufficiently tested and monitored (see report on mission to Bangladesh (A/HRC/15/55, para. 68); and report on mission to Slovenia (A/HRC/18/33/Add.2, paras. 63 and 64)). Even where data is collected, it is not always made available (see A/HRC/15/31/Add.3, para. 36).

79. Figures on wastewater treatment are difficult to interpret, as statistics often measure only the percentage of collected wastewater that is treated, leaving aside wastewater and resulting pollution that are not collected in networks, as well as large volumes of groundwater that users extract in a private manner which then contributes to wastewater production. Systematic monitoring of small wastewater treatment systems, including cesspools and septic tanks is challenging (see A/HRC/18/33/Add.2, para. 21). Moreover, wastewater from diffuse sources is almost impossible to quantify and monitor.

80. However, efforts are under way to improve monitoring of water quality in various countries (see report on mission to Senegal (A/HRC/21/42/Add.1, para. 64)), including groundwater monitoring (see A/HRC/18/33/Add.2, para. 9; and A/HRC/24/44/Add.3, para. 42). In addition, the Joint Monitoring Programme also seeks to improve water quality monitoring at the global level.

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[48] Yamile Najle, "Human rights to water and sanitation in courts". Prepared for consultation with civil society organizations on good practices, Geneva, September 2010.

[49] *Harmony Gold Mining Company Ltd v. Regional Director: Free State Department of Water Affairs and Others* (68161/2008) [2012] ZAGPPHC 127 (29 June 2012), para. 39.

[50] *European Committee on Social Rights, International Federation for Human Rights v. Greece*, Complaint No. 72/2011, 23 January 2013, paras. 149-154.

[51] *María de Jesús Medina Pérez and others v. Alvaro Vásquez*, Seventh Chamber of Review of the Constitutional Court, Case No. T-34561, 22 November 1994.

E. Informing the post-2015 sustainable development agenda

81. In the context of the ongoing discussion on the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda, apart from targets on the use of water, sanitation and hygiene,[52] it will be critical to integrate human rights standards and principles into goals on water resources[53] and wastewater management. The broader water resource management and wastewater management targets must not be approached from a purely environmental or economic perspective.

82. More emphasis should be put on the safety of drinking water. The Joint Monitoring Programme's proposal makes significant strides in that direction seeking to monitor bacterial contamination.[54] With regard to sanitation, its proposal incorporates the collection of wastewater and transportation to treatment places.[55] The Special Rapporteur welcomes those proposals.

83. However, owing to the "public bad" character of water pollution, it is imperative to formulate specific wastewater-related goals. Current proposals show a trend towards targets covering several dimensions: (a) preventing pollution; (b) reducing the impact of pollution through collection and treatment; and (c) reusing wastewater.[56] The Global Thematic Consultation on Water called for all used water and wastewater to be collected and treated before it is returned to nature and managed under principles of pollution prevention and reuse,[57] while the report of the High-level Panel suggests a target on the recycling or treatment of all municipal and industrial wastewater prior to discharge.[16]

84. From a human rights perspective, it will be crucial to integrate the concern for the most disadvantaged and most affected by water contamination. Framing targets accordingly might not be as straightforward as in the case of access to water, sanitation and hygiene. In that context, the elimination of inequalities can be monitored by comparing the levels of access of disadvantaged groups with that of the general population.[58] In the context of wastewater, access to wastewater management facilities does not correlate with those most affected by contamination. One proxy for monitoring progress for those most affected would be to focus monitoring on informal settlements, where challenges tend to be aggravated. Another crucial monitoring component is the collection and management of faecal sludge from septic tanks and pit latrines, as those technologies are predominantly used in low-income areas and have thus far received less attention, and the lack of safe disposal and management has direct impacts on the livelihoods of billions of people.

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[52] Joint Monitoring Programme proposal, available from www.wssinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/resources/A-proposal-for-consolidated-WASH-goal-targets-definitions-and-indicators_version7_Nov22_final.pdf.

[53] On the implications for water allocation, see Inga Winkler, "The Human Right to Water: Significance, Legal Status and Implications for Water Allocation" (Oxford, United Kingdom, Hart Publishing, 2012).

[54] Joint Monitoring Programme proposal, pp. 11 and 12.

[55] Ibid., pp. 12 and 13.

[56] Background discussion paper on wastewater, p. 21.

[57] UN-Water, report on The Post-2015 Water Thematic Consultation, The World We Want, endorsed conclusions and recommendations, p. 22 (available from www.worldwewant2015.org/file/341163/download/370843).

[58] Joint Monitoring Programme proposal, p. 26.

V. Conclusion and recommendations

85. **Water contamination has a significant impact on the realization of human rights, including the human right to water, but also the rights to health, food and a healthy environment, among many others. Human rights principles and standards are relevant beyond the context of water and sanitation service delivery and need to be integrated into discussions on water and wastewater management at all levels.**

86. **The technical solutions for improving wastewater management, curbing pollution and improving water quality exist — the greater challenge is a lack of political will to make wastewater management and pollution control a priority. However, while the challenges are manifold, the benefits of improving wastewater management are even bigger.**

87. **In line with this, the Special Rapporteur offers the following recommendations:**

(a) **States must develop a holistic approach to curbing pollution and improving water quality that addresses the different sources of contamination, including sewage, sludge and septage, that covers all sectors, including households, agriculture and industry, and that combines the dimensions of prevention, management and reuse;**

(b) **States must prioritize access to sanitation for everyone, but efforts need to go beyond achieving access aimed at improving wastewater management. States must meet their obligation to protect individuals from abuses to their human rights through contamination by others;**

(c) **States must prioritize addressing the most urgent and serious forms of contamination that vary among and within countries. They must reverse patterns of exclusion and address the situation of the most disadvantaged, who often experience the worst impact of water contamination;**

(d) **States must urgently address the aggravated challenges of contamination and lack of access to services in informal settlements. The lack of formal land tenure must not exclude people from enjoying their human rights;**

(e) **States should develop contextualized approaches that promote context-specific appropriate policies, facilities and financing mechanisms. The human rights framework does not promote a sewerage plus sewage treatment model under all circumstances. States have an obligation to progressively realize human rights, inter alia, through the adoption of a wastewater ladder approach. States should devote more attention to the management of septage and faecal sludge, which often poses the biggest challenges and threats but also provides the greatest opportunities and immediate public health gains;**

(f) **States should put in place stronger regulations and independent regulators. They should assign clear institutional responsibilities for all aspects of wastewater management and pollution control, including faecal sludge management. They should develop capacity, including for overseeing and coordinating the sector. They must ensure participation by concerned**

communities and stakeholders in decision-making on wastewater management in order to promote sustainable solutions;

(g) States must ensure adequate funding for wastewater management and pollution control. They must make efficient use of resources to avoid failed investments and unsustainable solutions, and they must carefully target resources to reach the most disadvantaged. They must ensure that wastewater charges are affordable to the population, including the most disadvantaged, and at the same time must raise appropriate charges from polluters and implement and enforce the "polluter pays" principle;

(h) States and non-State actors should carry out and publish impact assessments in line with human rights standards and principles. They should avoid referring to the confidentiality of information as an argument to keep impact assessments inaccessible. States must put in place effective, timely and accessible accountability mechanisms and ensure access to justice. States and other actors should improve data on wastewater and pollution, inter alia, also covering contamination through sludge and septage;

(i) Donors, international organizations and other non-State actors, including the private sector, should meet their human rights obligations and responsibilities respectively, and support States in improving wastewater management and pollution control, in particular through targeting resources to address the most urgent and serious challenges and improve the lives and livelihoods of the most excluded and disadvantaged populations;

(j) States should promote the integration of human rights into the post-2015 sustainable development agenda through, inter alia, incorporating the elimination of inequalities, drinking water safety, the collection and treatment of wastewater, especially addressing faecal sludge management, and putting particular emphasis on monitoring informal settlements.

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Globalization and interdependence: development cooperation with middle-income countries

Development cooperation with middle-income countries

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In aggregate, middle-income countries have shown robust growth and made progress in development, although performance varies among them. If history is a reference, countries in this group are vulnerable to being caught in a so-called "middle-income trap", where they lose competitiveness compared to low-income countries but lack the technological edge to catch up with high-income countries. The challenge is to redesign development strategies for them with a focus on innovative, sustainable and inclusive growth, gradually shifting to higher value added sectors.

The United Nations system is playing an important role in assisting middle-income countries in their economic and social development, as is indicated by both the replies of Governments to a survey and the reports on specific programmes and initiatives implemented by United Nations agencies. While the various forms of assistance provided by the United Nations system are a reflection of the effort to tailor initiatives to the needs of individual countries, significant further gains could possibly be achieved by developing a comprehensive strategic framework for development cooperation with middle-income countries.

* A/68/150.

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I. Introduction

1. At its sixty-sixth session in 2011, the General Assembly highlighted the fact that middle-income developing countries still face significant economic and social challenges, especially regarding poverty eradication, and that efforts to address those challenges should be supported in order to ensure that the achievements so far are sustained, including through support of the effective development of comprehensive cooperation policies.

2. In resolution 66/212, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on development cooperation with middle-income countries to it at its sixty-eighth session. The present report responds to this request. Reference is also made to resolution 64/208, which included a focus on the existing strategies and actions of the United Nations system on development cooperation with middle-income countries, taking into account the work of other relevant international organizations, including international financial institutions.

3. Similarly to the previous report on this matter (A/66/220), the present report tentatively identifies middle-income countries as those with a per capita gross national income (GNI) of between $1,036 and $12,615, following the World Bank classification using the Atlas method as of 1 July 2013. In 2013, there are 103 countries in this category.[1] The World Bank distinguishes this group of countries further, classifying those countries with a per capita GNI of less than $4,036 as lower middle-income countries. It does not recognize the United Nations category of least developed countries, but instead identifies low-income countries as one category in terms of its lending policies. In this sense, middle-income countries are defined as an intermediate category in terms of per capita income alone, unlike the category of least developed countries, which also considers economic and environmental vulnerability and the level of human development.

4. Middle-income countries constitute about 74 per cent of world population and 45 per cent of world gross product, measured in terms of purchasing power parity. This significant weight in the world economy also lends additional importance to the relatively strong aggregate growth performance of middle-income countries over the past years, especially in view of the protracted weaknesses in the high-income economies in the aftermath of the recent financial crisis. At the same time, the further intensification of trade and financial ties among middle-income countries and between middle-income and other developing countries in the broad context of South-South cooperation are also helping to make overall growth performances less volatile through a greater diversification of sources of growth.

5. However, middle-income countries are facing a number of challenges, including widespread poverty; inequality in income, opportunities and access to basic needs and services; growing environmental pollution and degradation, with significant effects, among others, for public health, especially in urban areas with high population density; social constraints, such as the limitations for women and girls in many countries to gain fully equal access to education, training and jobs; malnutrition; high levels of child mortality; limited or no access to sanitation; and a lack of adequate health-care systems in numerous countries. This illustrates the

[1] The number of middle-income countries quoted in the text with regard to the development assistance provided to them or surveys conducted in those countries reflects their status as a middle-income country during the implementation of assistance programmes or surveys.

multidimensional nature that characterizes development. In this sense, classifying a country based solely on an average monetary value can justifiably be seen as incomplete and in need of refinement.[2]

6. At the national level, despite their heterogeneity, many middle-income countries are facing a crucial development challenge. For many such countries, their place in the world economy in relative terms implies production costs (in particular unit labour costs) that exceed those of the low-income countries, while their lack of technological competitiveness keeps them below the ranks of high-income economies. This phenomenon of countries being trapped at their current development stage is analysed in more detail in section II.B of this report.

7. For policymakers in middle-income countries, designing and implementing effective development policies requires integrated approaches that cover a wide range of economic, social and environmental areas. This includes in the economic area, for example, the promotion of certain industries through financial incentives and an environment that is generally conducive to private enterprise; improvements in the education system that are relevant to and linked up with the specific needs of the real sectors in the economy; better infrastructure such as transportation, communication and energy networks; better and more widely available and accessible health-care systems; and a reliable and transparent institutional framework that includes in particular the clear assignment and protection of property rights or traditional forms of ownership. Given the multidimensional nature of development, individual countries will naturally differ in the precise set of their challenges and hence also the ideal policy measures. However, this still leaves room for synergies and the transfer of experiences in the policy sphere.

II. Major challenges for the development of middle-income countries

A. Recent macroeconomic and development trends

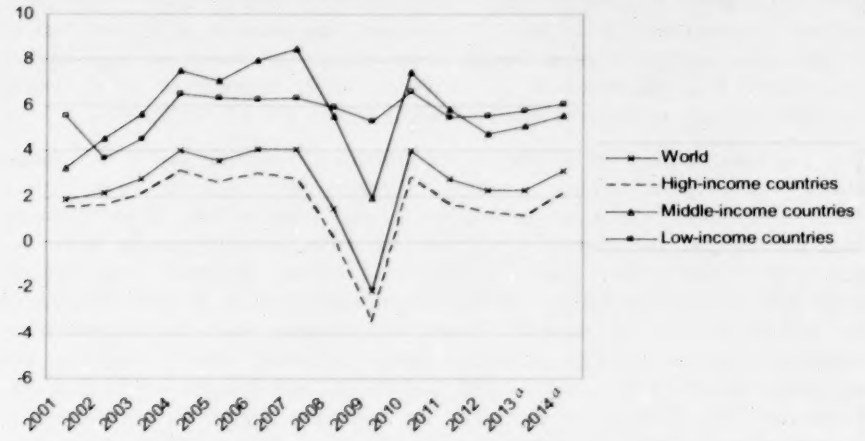
1. Economic growth

8. At the peak of the global economic crisis in 2008 and 2009, when economic activity contracted in the world as a whole, as well as in high-income countries, the group of middle-income countries still achieved a moderately positive average growth rate (figure I). In subsequent years, middle-income countries have continued to outperform other groups, posting an average aggregate growth rate of 6 per cent from 2010 to 2012, twice as high as the average growth in world GDP. Among the subregions, middle-income countries in Asia registered the highest average growth rate from 2010 to 2012 with 7.5 per cent (figure II), while the average growth rate of 3.3 per cent in Africa was at the lower end of the spectrum. In the latest economic

[2] For more details regarding the shortcomings of the classification based on per capita income, see Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, "Financing for development and middle-income countries: new challenges" (Santiago, 2011). An alternative proposal to classify middle-income countries by different levels of capital market access is made in Peter Fallon and others, "Middle-income countries: development challenges and growing global role" (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2001).

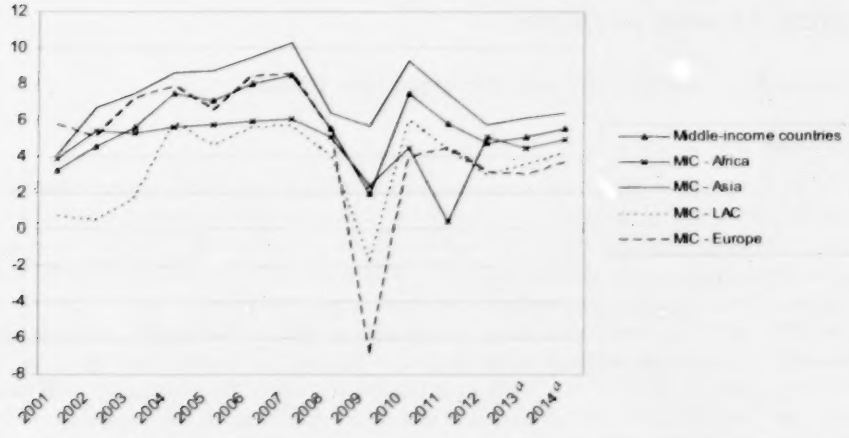
outlook, growth in middle-income countries is expected to remain robust in 2013-2014.[3]

Figure I
Annual real GDP growth according to country classifications (percentage change)



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
[a] United Nations forecasts.

Figure II
Annual real GDP growth of middle-income countries by region (percentage change)



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
[a] United Nations forecasts.

[3] This analysis is based on the classification of middle-income countries as of July 2012. Data are from the WESP/LINK database of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, unless otherwise stated. For a detailed analysis of the global economic outlook, see *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2013* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.II.C.2) and *World Economic Situation and Prospects: Update as of mid-2013*.

9. The headline growth trajectory of middle-income countries requires several qualifications. First, there is a diverse range of growth performances among them. For example, middle-income countries in Asia at times registered growth rates almost twice as high as those for European middle-income countries, as the latter suffered from the European debt and economic crisis through their close trading and financial ties with the euro area, reducing their overall growth rates.

10. In addition, the economic crisis appears to have led to a long-lasting impact on the overall growth of middle-income countries. The average aggregate growth rate for middle-income countries of 6 per cent for 2010-2012 stands in contrast to their average aggregate growth rate of 7.8 per cent in the three years before the crisis (2005-2007). The sharpest slowdown in rates of growth occurred in middle-income countries in Africa, from 5.9 per cent to 3.3 per cent, and in Europe, from 7.8 per cent to 3.8 per cent. Middle-income countries were especially exposed to the crisis through a myriad of transmission channels, such as trade, commodity prices, international capital flows and remittances.

11. Moreover, per capita growth has been significantly lower than overall growth for a number of middle-income countries, particularly for those with high fertility rates, especially in Africa. The average per capita growth rate for African middle-income countries reached 2.9 per cent in 2012, while the average for Asia was 4.7 per cent. Such significant growth disparities also imply sharp differences in the prospects for reducing poverty, both because of the compounding effect and the often already lower starting base level of per capita income. This is especially relevant for middle-income countries, where 37 per cent of the population lives on less than $2 per day.[4]

2. International trade

12. The trend of middle-income countries playing an increasingly important role in global trade remains intact, with the share of exports by these countries in total global exports having increased in every year since 2000, from 25.2 per cent in 2000 to 32.8 per cent in 2012. However, this trend was largely driven by middle-income countries in Asia, which registered almost a doubling of their share in global exports, from 11.9 per cent to 20.4 per cent, over this time span. Middle-income countries in Europe also saw their share increase, albeit only moderately. In contrast, the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa experienced a decline in their share of global exports. Countries with more diversified and higher value added exports appear to have seen a more positive trend for their share than those with a more resource-based export structure.

13. Trade also plays a relatively more significant role within the economies of middle-income countries than those of other groups. On average, exports constituted 36.8 per cent of GDP in middle-income countries in 2012, compared to 32.9 per cent for the world and 31.5 per cent for high-income countries. Of the individual regions, only middle-income countries in Latin America and the Caribbean showed a markedly lower share of 23.8 per cent. Overall, this leaves middle-income countries, and especially those exporting only one or a few commodities, relatively exposed to the trends in global trade.

[4] World Bank, World Development Indicators 2013.

3. Foreign direct investment

14. Foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to middle-income countries have increased steadily over the past two decades, reaching over $600 billion in 2012, although they have fluctuated in the past few years since the global financial crisis.[5] Available data from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development indicate that more than half of inward FDI stock in the middle-income group is in the services sector[6] compared to four fifths for the high-income group and 30 per cent for the low-income group, illustrating the fact that the share of services in total FDI rises with economic development. As a result of the development of medium-technology industries and the liberalization of services, the group of middle-income countries has been able to attract investments from both developed and developing firms and from a wide range of industries. Meanwhile, outward capital flows from middle-income countries have increased significantly in recent years.

4. Inflation

15. Inflation rates have, on average, fallen in the middle-income countries, reaching 5.9 per cent in 2012. Middle-income countries in Africa posted the highest aggregate level of inflation with 7.8 per cent in 2012, while those in Europe showed the sharpest decline, from 15.3 per cent in 2008 to 5.7 per cent in 2012. The generally weaker growth has been a major moderating influence on inflation rates. However, in relative terms, inflation in middle-income countries remains about twice as high as the global average and three times as high as in high-income countries, underpinned by factors such as solid demand on the back of revenues from exports of natural resources, below average harvests, military conflicts and capital inflows due to the extremely accommodative monetary policies in high-income countries.

16. The relatively high inflation rates in middle-income countries have significant macroeconomic and social implications. First, they limit the monetary policy space to support growth through a more accommodative stance. At the same time, inflation reduces the purchasing power of households, which becomes an especially serious issue when, as is the case in middle-income countries, many people barely have enough income to satisfy their basic needs.

5. Debt sustainability

17. The ratio of total government debt to GDP for middle-income countries as a whole stood at 47.3 per cent in 2012, a slight increase from 45.5 per cent in 2011.[7] Meanwhile, their total external debt increased moderately from 21.2 per cent to 22.3 per cent of GDP during the same time span (figure III). While these overall numbers are relatively low in historical terms and the debt sustainability of middle-income countries can be characterized as encouraging, the debt situation remains problematic in a number of middle-income countries. This is the case especially in

[5] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *World Investment Report 2013. Global Value Chains: Investment and Trade for Development* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.II.D.5).

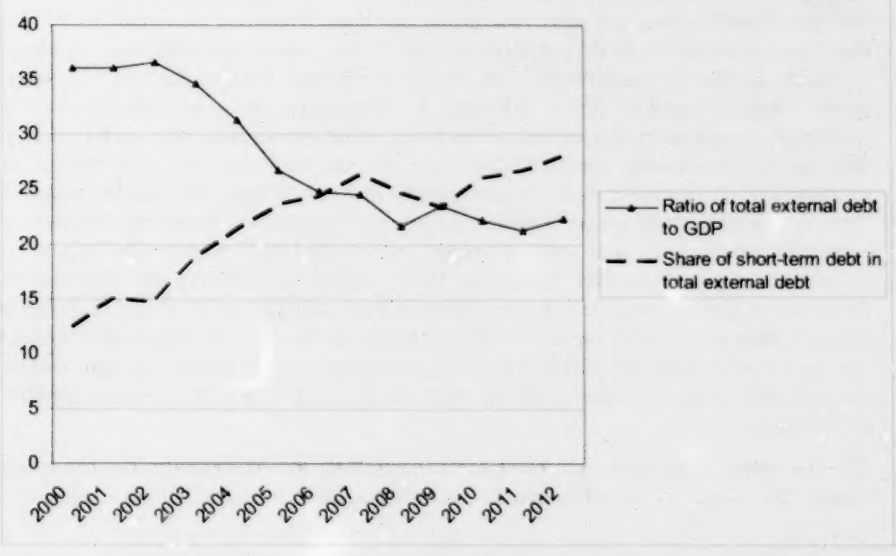
[6] Those data refer to a subgroup of middle-income countries.

[7] This analysis is based on the chapter on debt sustainability in the forthcoming *Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force Report 2013*. The data have been recalculated specifically for the group of middle-income countries.

some small States that face a combination of unique macroeconomic conditions and sovereign debt challenges. For example, in the Caribbean, a number of countries stabilized and even reduced their public debt ratios before the global financial crisis, underpinned by economic growth. However, the crisis then had a severely negative impact on these countries because of their close linkages with the United States and Europe and a significant reduction in tourism income. Policy responses included higher public expenditure to support growth and limit the negative impact on employment, resulting in increased public debt.

18. The composition of the public debt of middle-income countries has been characterized by two important trends. First, the share of short-term debt in external debt has increased for these countries as a whole from 12.5 per cent in 2000 to 28 per cent in 2012 (figure III). This can pose a significant refinancing risk, especially in an environment of increasing interest rates that is currently expected in the context of the unwinding of monetary stimulus policies in high-income economies. However, the overall macroeconomic risk is at least partially reduced by the decline in the share of external debt in GDP. Second, some countries have made increasing use of private instead of public borrowing, driven by a number of favourable factors such as strong growth and solid commodity export prices. While private financing broadens the base of available funding, it can also increase debt vulnerability, especially when those loans that are non-concessional are being taken by countries that rely on a narrow export base.

Figure III
Selected debt ratios of middle-income countries (percentage)



Source: International Monetary Fund, database of the *World Economic Outlook April 2013*.

6. Employment and labour markets

19. While the average unemployment rate for middle-income countries increased at the peak of the crisis in 2009, driven especially by the impact of weaker export demand, it has since been receding to its pre-crisis level. However, official data paint only a partial picture of the true conditions in labour markets. For example, in many countries, underemployment and informal employment remain widespread but are often not reflected in any official data. In this context, informal employment also impacts on or holds implications for human rights and child protection issues in a number of countries. In addition, many middle-income countries exhibit significant gender gaps in their labour markets.[8]

20. Moreover, unemployment rates vary significantly by region. While Asia showed the lowest unemployment rate at 4.6 per cent in 2012,[9] not least due to a growth performance based on exporting labour-intensive goods, the reverse is true for countries in Africa. The estimated average unemployment rate of 9.9 per cent in 2012 stems from a number of factors, including a lack of higher value added economic activity and the accompanying generation of more and better jobs. At the same time, African middle-income countries also have the youngest population, with 38 per cent of the total population under 15 years old in 2010.[10] This demographic structure stands to create even more pressure on labour markets in the future.

7. Progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in middle-income countries

21. Middle-income countries play a crucial role within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, as they not only comprise almost three quarters of the world population, but also two thirds of those living on less than $1.25 per day.[11] In addition, the profound nature of the various social and economic problems in many middle-income countries can both compound their impact on individual people and complicate their solution. In particular, in many middle-income countries, people are exposed to greater financial vulnerability, for example due to missing or inadequate social safety nets. In several countries, the notion of vulnerability acquires an even greater weight in light of high HIV/AIDS infection rates. In parallel, there remains a high degree of inequality in many middle-income countries, which tends not only to hinder growth, but also weaken the impact of growth in terms of poverty reduction. With regard to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, middle-income countries have gained further in their relevance through their growing influence at the international level, their measurable impact on low-income countries through growing linkages such as trade and remittances, and the provision of financial aid to other developing countries by some middle-income countries.[12]

22. In terms of progress achieved so far regarding the Millennium Development Goals, the group of middle-income countries offers a mixed picture, although

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[8] International Labour Organization (ILO), "Global employment trends for women" (Geneva, 2012).

[9] Data source: ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market database.

[10] Data source: *Revision of the World Population Prospects*, 2010.

[11] Data source for this section: World Bank, World Development Indicator database.

[12] See also Department for International Development, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: the middle-income countries" (London, 2004).

remarkable progress has been made in many respects. For example, a number of countries have already achieved a reduction of more than half in the proportion of people living on less than $1.25 per day. In China, this ratio fell from 60.2 per cent in 1990 to 11.8 per cent in 2009 and in Brazil from 17.2 per cent to 6.1 per cent over the same period. Various other countries have seen a reduction in this ratio as well, although to a more limited extent. In India, for example, the ratio fell from 49.4 per cent in 1994 to 32.7 per cent in 2010. The vulnerability of middle-income countries is illustrated by those cases where the ratio showed a pronounced increase, only subsequently to fall back to previous levels or even lower. This occurred for example in Romania, Kazakhstan and Venezuela. In addition, progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goal target on hunger has been uneven, with middle-income countries accounting for 69.6 per cent of global undernourishment.[13]

23. Millennium Development Goal 2 to achieve universal primary education finds particular resonance in the context of a lacking or even absent education system being identified as a major factor holding back the social and economic development of some middle-income countries. Numerous middle-income countries have almost achieved this goal, including Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tunisia and Viet Nam. However, a number of countries still face challenges in ensuring primary education on a universal basis. In Lesotho, for example, the total enrolment ratio reached 75 per cent in 2011, although this comes in the wake of a drop from 70.6 per cent in 1990 to a low of 56.4 per cent in 1999. In Pakistan and Senegal, the ratio still falls short of full enrolment, with 72.1 per cent and 78.9 per cent in 2011, respectively, but represents a sharp increase from previous levels. In a number of middle-income countries, a continued gender disparity in access not just to education, but also to job training and the job market, creates a significant additional dimension of vulnerability for women and girls.

24. A further basic determinant of development is sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, an area in which several middle-income countries have seen remarkable progress. This includes, for example, Ghana, where the proportion of the population that uses an improved drinking water source increased from 53 per cent in 1990 to 86 per cent in 2011, and India, which saw an increase in this ratio from 70 per cent to 92 per cent over the same time frame. However, in some countries, more remains to be done to achieve sanitary improvements. In Angola, for example, only slightly more than half of the population had access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation in 2011, despite significant fiscal benefits from oil exports. Meanwhile, in Yemen, the ratio has actually decreased, from 66 per cent in 1990 to 55 per cent in 2011.

25. The global economic crisis constitutes a significant risk factor for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The more immediate impact is likely to stem from increasing poverty rates due to higher unemployment, lower incomes and lower remittances. However, certain effects of the crisis might become apparent only over a longer period of time.[14] These could include, for example, a drop in the completion rate in primary education, as families might be less able to afford education fees or children might have to work in order to contribute to

[13] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), "The state of food insecurity in the world" (Rome, 2012).

[14] See also World Bank, *Global Monitoring Report 2010. The MDGs After the Crisis* (Washington, D.C., 2010).

household income, or fiscal pressures could lead to cuts in investment or current spending in primary education. A similar deterioration could occur in other indicators such as child and maternal mortality rates. This only underlines the need for policymakers to remain focused on the basic needs of people in the allocation of public funds, especially at a time of crisis. This applies also to donors of development assistance.

B. The middle-income trap

26. The concept of the "middle-income trap" is relatively new in the economic literature and is subject to some controversy. There is no consensus among economists on the validity of this term, as some question the existence of the "trap" and prefer to use the notion of slowing growth instead.

27. The factual evidence of the last several decades shows that many low-income countries, which recorded a sustained period of rapid economic growth and eventually moved to the middle-income country group, later experienced a significant economic slowdown. The difference in average growth rates for a seven-year period before and after the slowdown in some cases exceeded 10 percentage points. Concurrently, the per capita income gap between those countries and high-income economies remains large and for most of them is in the near term probably unbridgeable. To converge with the high-income countries, they would need rapid and stable economic expansion. The notion of the middle-income trap therefore refers to a situation where a middle-income country, after reaching a certain level of per capita income, cannot move much beyond that income level as its per capita economic growth remains mediocre. For example, of 101 middle-income countries in 1960, only 13 had moved into the high-income category by 2008, while the rest were either trapped in the middle-income group or even regressed to the low-income level.[15] A large group of middle-income countries, many of them in Latin America, are considered today to be caught in a middle-income trap. In the last several decades, they have undergone consecutive periods of growth and decline, with real per capita income fluctuating around a certain level. Although those countries witnessed some acceleration of economic growth at the beginning of the past decade, that expansion was largely driven by a commodity price boom and large inflows of remittances.

28. There are different reasons underpinning the phenomenon of the middle-income trap. In general, low-income countries have larger growth potential, as their growth prospects are strongly related to success in addressing the supply-side bottlenecks of the economy and building up domestic production capacity. Low-income countries can embark on growth through such strategies as switching from agriculture to higher-productivity activities, ongoing urbanization, including women in the labour force, developing the energy sector and other infrastructure, integrating into the global chain of production (starting with providing low-skill labour for manufacturing or the development of extractive industries) and diversifying an initially very narrow output base. However, as wages in those catch-up developing countries rise, the low-skills manufacturing sector loses its competitiveness to lower-income countries, while on the other hand, they cannot compete with the

[15] World Bank, *China 2030: Building a Modern, Harmonious, and Creative Society* (Washington, D.C., 2013), p. 12.

high-income economies in the area of high-skill, high value added products.[16] Gains from urbanization and from absorbing rural labour into manufacturing sectors, as well as the employment of women, eventually taper off and the accumulation of capital stock simultaneously requires more spending to offset its depreciation. As a country reaches middle-income status, it has to find new strategies to sustain growth. After losing wage competitiveness, it has to improve the value added and non-cost competitiveness of production, as well as address the domestic demand in the economy, which is becoming increasingly relevant for further economic growth.

29. However, some middle-income countries, including a number of resource-rich countries that have attained middle-income status due to high oil and mineral prices, remain heavily dependent on primary commodity sectors, with limited value added activities and few linkages to other sectors of the economy (this includes, for example, Angola, Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan and Zambia in sub-Saharan Africa). Many middle-income countries are characterized by specialization in low value added activities (with a few exceptions such as the aviation industry in Brazil), have low investment-to-GDP ratios and low spending on education and research, and in most of these countries the business environment has serious scope for improvement in order to attract FDI flows into non-commodity sectors and encourage domestic private investment. The high degree of inequality, which exists in many middle-income countries, curbs the emergence of a middle class and suppresses domestic demand. Initially weak exchange rates, which bolster growth in the early stages of development in low-income economies, can eventually become a drag on domestic consumption, the import of the latest technologies and the build-up of capital stock, and risk keeping the economies mired in a focus on export-oriented low value added activities. Moreover, a large informal economy may also be an impediment to further economic progress, particularly because of the challenges it poses for tax collection, although with the right policy mix, the informal sector may be transformed into an additional driving force for domestic demand and trade.

30. According to some research based on cross-country evidence, after reaching per capita income of about $17,000 (using 2005 as the base year) and meeting other benchmark criteria regarding factor productivity and the share of manufacturing in output, growth is likely to slow noticeably.[17] However, it is imperative for middle-income countries to graduate to the high-income level, as the failure to do so will incur significant social and economic costs in terms of income, development of infrastructure, public health, addressing poverty and inequality and rising living standards in general, and may even affect political stability.[18] Moreover, a drastic slowdown of growth in major middle-income countries, and especially the so-called BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), would imply

[16] See, for example, Homi Kharas and Harinder Kohli, "What is the middle-income trap, why do countries fall into it and how can it be avoided?", *Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies*, vol. 3, No. 3 (September 2011).

[17] See, for example, Barry Eichengreen, Donghyun Park and Kwanho Shin, "Growth slowdowns redux: new evidence on the middle-income trap", National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 18673 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, January 2013) and "When fast growing economies slow down: international evidence and implications for China", National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 16919 (March 2011).

[18] See, for example, Harpaul Kohli and Natasha Mukherjee, "Potential costs to Asia of the middle income trap", *Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies*, vol. 3, No. 3 (September 2011).

serious spillover effects for the global economy through weaker global aggregate demand and would severely impact countries dependent on commodity exports.

31. The experience of some East Asian countries demonstrates that with the implementation of the appropriate policies, the middle-income trap can be avoided. There is no "one-size-fits-all" policy mix, however. Countries have to shift from initial capital accumulation to faster total factor productivity growth and become able to compete internationally in higher value added sectors. This implies introducing technological modernization, especially for those countries which need to move away from a resource-driven growth pattern, developing the institutional environment to encourage high-tech or industrial development and innovation, expanding export markets and shifting from a predominantly export-oriented to a more balanced pattern of growth. This, in turn, requires substantial investments in infrastructure and energy (some middle-income countries, for example India, the Philippines and Thailand, have large investment needs in that area), research and development and human capital. An efficient education system producing highly-skilled professionals as a precondition for innovation, a transparent and predictable business environment, an efficient financial sector and the existence of a stable middle class are further crucial preconditions in this regard. Even in the middle-income countries, the employment of women still needs to increase. Those countries which are faced with ageing populations may have to reduce dependency ratios by raising the retirement age. Macroeconomic and financial stability is especially important and countries should have macroprudential controls in place. Equally important are the quality of institutions and the business environment.

32. The importance of sustaining growth in middle-income countries, transforming them into high value added economies and putting them on a sustainable development track cannot be overstated. The policy path of trade liberalization, openness to FDI and good-quality institutions followed by many middle-income countries, has not always produced desirable outcomes. Specific government policies (implemented, for example, in East Asia), and in particular industrial policy, have helped to find new comparative advantages and niches in the global economy. In various cases, it was important that public support for the private sector was combined with performance requirements. On the other hand, there are examples of unsuccessful industrial policies, which have led to an inefficient allocation of resources. Even for the successful economies, however, diversification and upgrading to high-skilled industries has been a gradual process, starting with the development of new production in industries where skills were easily transferable (such as steel and electronics) and only afterwards transitioning towards higher value added sectors. Today, countries may skip some intermediate stages of development by adopting more efficient and environmentally friendly technologies and creating better institutions. The middle-income countries cannot simply copy the past development path of the developed countries, particularly the unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. For the middle-income countries, the crucial challenge is to design and implement policies that both promote economic transformation and are inclusive, environmentally friendly and sustainable. High-income countries must provide the technological assistance needed in this regard.

III. Cooperation of the United Nations system with middle-income countries

A. Major achievements in development cooperation with middle-income countries

33. Much of the work of the United Nations in middle-income countries focuses on the elimination of disparities, the promotion of equity and social inclusion, assistance in response to human rights violations, capacity development and advocacy. Advice on policy formulation and implementation and other targeted technical support are also important elements of United Nations engagement in middle-income countries.

34. To provide a more empirical picture of the state of United Nations development cooperation with middle-income countries, the present report makes use of data collected through a survey of programme country Governments. The responses to the survey were received by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs from February to April 2012.[19] For the purpose of this report, a subset of replies from middle-income countries to questions from this wider survey was analysed. Of 107 middle-income countries that received the survey, 76 (71 per cent) submitted replies.

35. The survey results indicated that for 79 per cent of the responding middle-income countries, the relevance of the United Nations system to country development needs has increased over the past four years. Respondents indicated that the contribution of the United Nations system has been especially significant in the area of the environment and sustainable development, followed by health and governance and public administration. In this regard, the cross-boundary nature of environmental issues and the transferability of solutions, especially in the health and governance areas, can be seen as matching well with the attributes and strengths that characterize the United Nations system, especially with respect to promoting the adoption of common practices. Other areas of United Nations contributions that were identified by a significant number of middle-income countries included poverty reduction, human rights and equity and gender equality. As the survey results were treated anonymously, it was not possible to take into account the population size of the respective countries, which may alter the global ranking of priorities.

36. The types of support from the United Nations cited as most relevant by individual countries were: strengthening national capacities for policy and strategy development and supporting training and institution-building. Further areas cited were: providing advice on development policies and strategies; supporting gender equality and women's empowerment; providing knowledge and technical expertise; and supporting studies on topics such as human development and children.

37. In addition, 86 per cent of the responding middle-income countries indicated that the activities of the United Nations are closely or very closely aligned with their

[19] The original survey was conducted in response to General Assembly resolution 64/289. An analysis of the results of the original survey can be found in "Results of survey of programme country Governments" available from http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/pdf/government_survey_report_10_june_2012.pdf.

development needs and priorities. At the same time, 96 per cent indicated agreement or strong agreement with the statement that the efforts of the United Nations are focused on assisting their respective country in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

38. Looking ahead, in terms of the most important areas for United Nations assistance to middle-income countries in the next four years, the most-cited area was the environment and sustainable development, including climate change, water and environmental sanitation, followed by health and poverty reduction. Regarding the measures that the United Nations should take to become more effective at country level, the strongest support was expressed for a focus on areas where the United Nations has a clear comparative advantage. Further measures that also received strong support included making better use of results-based methods and improving the design of programmes and projects.

39. A significant area of engagement by the United Nations is the facilitation of information exchange regarding middle-income countries. To this end, the United Nations system has organized or participated in conferences focusing on issues such as sustainable development, the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 and regional cooperation and integration. Examples in this respect include the High-Level Conference of Middle-Income Countries on the theme of "Challenges for sustainable development and international cooperation in middle-income countries: the role of networks for prosperity" that was held from 12 to 14 June 2013 in San José and facilitated by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, and the regional conference entitled "The middle-income countries perspective on sustainable development in CIS, Eastern and Southern Europe" held on 16 and 17 May 2013 in Minsk. In parallel to this, the Economic and Social Council provides a platform for middle-income countries to share information and expertise as well as to consult with other Member States, civil society and parliamentarians. Moreover, much importance is attributed by United Nations organizations and funds, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), to expanding regional cooperation networks in middle-income countries in order to include a greater number of academic and technical institutions.

40. During the period 2011-2013, the United Nations system has been actively engaged in middle-income countries. UNDP has implemented a wide range of programmes in around 100 middle-income countries in order to reach internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Those UNDP activities were conducted in the framework of its strategic plan and its four focus areas, in accordance with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and country programme projects in the countries concerned. In middle-income countries, UNDP has worked on poverty and other Millennium Development Goals focus area in 87 countries, on democratic governance in 73 countries, on crisis prevention and recovery in 38 countries and on the environment and energy in 91 countries.

41. Other agencies have addressed the development needs of middle-income countries in accordance with their specific mandates. For example, for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), human rights and child protection issues remain critical challenges. In addition to ongoing cooperation in health, education, HIV/AIDS and social protection, UNICEF has addressed the challenges of

alternative care for children in the context of deinstitutionalization, the condition of ethnic minority and migrant children, justice for children in contact with the law and the commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of children. UNICEF has addressed those issues through greater use of piloting for knowledge generation and influencing policy development, strengthening capacities in data collection, real-time analysis, management and reporting and supporting policy change through research and advocacy. In addition, the agency has promoted digital communications and communication for development, strategic leveraging of the private sector for funding and child-friendly partnerships, strategic partnerships and South-South exchange, and worked to align technical skills and capacities to meet the demands of middle-income countries.

42. Most of the current country programmes implemented by UNFPA are in middle-income countries, reflecting the general shift of countries from the low- to middle-income category. Middle-income countries receive about half of all UNFPA resources. UNFPA focuses on promoting universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and reproductive rights in all categories of countries, including the middle-income ones. It is also working in middle-income countries on the so-called "emerging" issues related to population dynamics, including ageing, urbanization, migration and climate change, especially with respect to data collection and analysis, and youth issues. UNFPA promotes broad, inclusive partnerships and facilitates South-South cooperation. The development of a middle-income country strategic plan in Botswana in 2011 in close cooperation with all United Nations agencies and other stakeholders in the country is only one example of building such partnerships. The draft strategic plan of UNFPA for 2014-2017 confirms that the engagement in middle-income countries remains an important part of UNFPA programming and proposes a business model that should increase effectiveness in addressing the needs of middle-income countries, while taking their growing policy capacity into account.

43. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) assisted middle-income countries from 2011 to 2013 by preparing and approving 52 investment operations for a total investment of over $4.78 billion, representing 64 per cent of all investments mobilized in collaboration with FAO main financing partners. FAO assistance has targeted rural entrepreneurship, agricultural competitiveness, productivity and diversification; dissemination of agricultural research and technology; land administration; enhancement of desert biodiversity and livelihoods; management of irrigation and water resources; restoration of forest ecosystems; and management of disaster recovery and natural hazards. Support to middle-income countries over the last three years has mainly been related to Millennium Development Goal 7 on environmental sustainability.

44. The World Food Programme (WFP) has an operational presence in 44 middle-income countries and provides assistance in the areas of safety nets and emergency preparedness and response to support Governments in addressing food insecurity and malnutrition. In Timor-Leste, for example, WFP provides support through food-for-work activities and school feeding programmes.

45. Many activities of the United Nations funds and agencies have been conducted in collaboration with the World Bank Group, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the African

Development Bank. United Nations agencies also cooperate with regional bodies such as the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Global Environment Facility bilateral donors and Governments.

46. In addition to the operational programmes conducted at the country level, UNDP and other agencies have also undertaken broader initiatives related to middle-income countries. In January 2012, a joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Office for Project Services, UNICEF, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and WFP was organized to discuss the role and presence of the United Nations system in middle-income countries in achieving internationally agreed development goals. The meeting also involved representatives of Member States and academia, who became actively engaged in the discussion on the subject. This event was one of the key initiatives contributing to the discussion of the engagement of the United Nations system with middle-income countries, in response to the report of the Secretary-General on development cooperation with middle-income countries (A/66/220) and General Assembly resolution 66/212. The participants in the event agreed that middle-income countries remain in need of support from the international community because of their unfinished development agenda, taking into account in particular such aspects as poverty and inequality.

47. Some of the regional bureaux of UNDP are exploring opportunities to start systematically supporting middle-income countries in their respective regions. For instance, in an effort to ensure more engagement with middle-income countries, the new regional programme for Africa will focus on, among other priorities, more upstream policy advisory services and participatory governance to translate growth and natural resource wealth into better social and human development outcomes in Africa. The regional bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean prepared a number of reports and publications and organized a number of events with a middle-income country focus. The draft strategic plan of UNDP for 2014-2017 (DP/2013/12) includes the provision of continuing assistance to middle-income countries.

48. The new strategic partnership agenda for UNDP, which has been implemented since 2009, is seeking to achieve a number of key objectives, such as intensifying South-South cooperation and the partnership with emerging economies to accelerate progress on the Millennium Development Goals and other development goals. This should be accomplished by leveraging trade, finance and knowledge flows within the framework of South-South cooperation, by analysing the policy experiences of those countries that achieved notable progress in their development and by working in partnership with developing countries to benefit from the substantive participation of successful countries, which are becoming new strategic partnership countries in UNDP policy discussions. A number of bilateral agreements have been signed in this context, including partnership agreements to strengthen cooperation on regional and global issues, such as South-South and triangular cooperation. In particular, in 2011 and 2012, UNDP concluded such agreements with India, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey, in addition to the agreements with Brazil and China signed earlier.

B. Engagement of international financial institutions in middle-income countries

49. The World Bank has been aiming to take a flexible and multidimensional approach to assisting middle-income countries.[20] Given the differing development needs of these countries, it has worked with them both as clients and shareholders and provided a wide range of services, depending on the specific conditions in an individual country. These services have included, for example, financial products such as loans, guarantees and risk management instruments, and knowledge and advisory services, including providing services on a reimbursable basis. A further focus has been to make greater use of the capacities of individual countries in financial management and procurement and to increase private sector investment in middle-income countries.

50. The operational activities of the World Bank can be distinguished in different ways. In various middle-income countries, the World Bank supports development policy through significant lending programmes. In other cases, advisory services have been taking on an increasingly significant role, accompanied by a decrease in lending. Some countries are no longer borrowing from the World Bank and instead rely solely on its advisory services, often reimbursing the institution for its services. Clients in this regard also include subnational government entities, State-owned enterprises and other non-sovereign entities, besides central government institutions. These services have been embedded in, and combined with, domestically financed development programmes in a number of cases.

51. The shift towards advisory services is to some extent naturally underpinned by the development path of middle-income countries, as an increasing level of development often implies a relatively less pronounced need for financing but still a significant or possibly even greater need for assistance in strengthening the capacity to implement policies. In this regard, the changing nature of the challenges faced by middle-income countries as they develop is illustrated by a number of examples such as ageing populations, pension reform, trade and tax policy, tertiary education, social inequality, competitiveness and urbanization. Against this background, the World Bank has focused in particular on its role in facilitating the transfer and sharing of knowledge and experiences in its cooperation with middle-income countries. This has included also an emphasis on South-South cooperation, both between middle-income countries and between middle- and low-income countries.

52. Given the potentially significant positive ramifications of inclusive and sustainable growth in middle-income countries in the rest of the world, the World Bank has supported middle-income countries in their role as global actors in various international settings. This strategy is based on the assessment that significant synergies can be harnessed at the global level from development in middle-income countries as regards poverty reduction, international financial stability and global issues such as climate change, the secure supply of food, water and energy and international trade. In this context, the World Bank cooperates with middle-income countries at the country, regional and global levels.

[20] See World Bank, *Development Results in Middle-Income Countries: an Evaluation of the World Bank's Support* (Washington, D.C., 2007).

53. During the period from 2011 to 2013, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) continued to adapt to the increased importance of middle-income countries to address their particular challenges. The Fund continued to provide support to middle-income countries, in particular through its surveillance of macroeconomic and financial developments and policies (analysis, consultations, policy advice) and, if needed, by making the its resources temporarily available through its various lending facilities.

54. With respect to its surveillance activities, the IMF has taken important steps to strengthen their quality and coverage, putting more emphasis on cross-border and cross-sectoral linkages and paying closer attention to the spillover effects of economic policies in the world's largest economies and linkages between the financial sector and the real economy. In this context, the Fund implemented its integrated surveillance decision in January 2013, which strengthened the legal framework for surveillance.[21] That decision makes consultations with Member States based on article IV of the IMF Charter an instrument not only for bilateral surveillance, but also for multilateral surveillance.

55. Regarding its lending facilities, the IMF has made several reforms in recent years, aimed at increasing the flexibility of its financial arrangements.[22] The new flexibility in its lending framework seeks to allow for more effective responses to the varying circumstances of member countries. For example, the Fund has introduced several facilities since the crisis, including a flexible credit line and precautionary and liquidity line. In addition, its instruments for emergency assistance have been consolidated under a new rapid financing instrument, which may be used to support a range of urgent balance-of-payments needs without the need for a fully fledged programme. In May 2013, the IMF also issued a new guidance note for public debt sustainability analysis in market-access countries.[23]

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

56. **There is a broad agreement within the international community that middle-income countries should continue to receive development assistance from the United Nations system and that the assistance provided to them should be improved in many dimensions. As progress is being achieved towards the Millennium Development Goals, the priorities of the international development agenda, including in middle-income countries, are shifting towards sustainable development goals, while at the same time keeping in focus marginalized and vulnerable groups and situations where progress towards the Goals is lagging.**

57. **While the United Nations system is widely represented in middle-income countries, providing development assistance on many fronts, a continuing problem is the lack of an overarching, well-defined strategic framework for development cooperation with these countries, as the principles and modalities**

[21] "IMF surveillance", IMF factsheet available from http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/surv.htm.

[22] See, for instance, "IMF lending", factsheet, available from http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/howlend.htm and "IMF's response to the global economic crisis", factsheet, available from http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/changing.htm.

[23] Available from http://www.imf.org/external/np/pp/eng/2013/050913.pdf.

of this cooperation have yet to be fully defined. This could also help in aligning programme activities more closely with the specific needs of individual middle-income countries and enable better use of financial and substantive synergies between agencies. The United Nations system, compared with other development institutions, has a number of unique advantages, such as its presence in every part of the world, the ability to engage highly-skilled professionals from all countries in its operational activities and a compelling international mandate.

58. One concrete proposal to improve coordination and cooperation in the United Nations system regarding its approach towards middle-income countries is to establish a United Nations inter-agency plan of action.[24] A United Nations working group could be set up and charged with supporting the implementation of such a plan of action, building on existing precedents in developing institutional frameworks.[25] Of particular relevance in this regard is the relatively low cost of this option, as it would predominantly rely on already existing expertise in the system.

59. While the classification of middle-income countries based on per capita income captures significant dimensions of development, it also provides only an incomplete picture that masks significant disparities between and within countries, both in terms of per capita income itself and with respect to other variables that characterize economic and social development. This is even the case when taking into account the distinction between lower- and upper-middle-income countries. In this regard, the General Assembly noted in resolution 64/208 that national averages referring to criteria such as per capita income may not be sufficient to take into account the particularities of middle-income countries.

60. Consequently, a more refined classification system for the development status of countries could be developed to take better into account the multidimensionality of development. This could incorporate, for example, some elements from the methodology used to define the least developed countries, which is based on income, human development indicators and economic and environmental vulnerability. Another possible criterion could be the different levels of international capital market access.[26] Any alternative classification criteria could also be used to define subgroups of middle-income countries, continuing to use per capita income as the primary criterion.

61. The formulation of a common strategic framework and the design of a more refined classification system should be seen in combination with each other. The classification system would serve not only to describe the status quo, but would also be used to measure changes over time and thus the impact of policies. Taken together, a common strategy and a more refined classification system would significantly increase the prospects for a stronger and more

[24] This proposal was discussed in more detail, for example, at the conference on middle-income countries held in Minsk on 16 and 17 May 2013.

[25] Two examples of existing institutional frameworks for coordination and cooperation are the Inter-agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons and the United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity.

[26] Fallon and others, "Middle-income countries" (see footnote 2 above).

targeted policy impact in trying to address the many challenges of middle-income countries.

62. It is also important that enhancing assistance to middle-income countries does not crowd out or impact in any adverse way the development agenda for low-income countries and especially the least developed countries and that, moreover, a mutually beneficial situation through positive spillover and network effects is created for all involved parties.

63. The sustainability of the external debt of middle-income counties should be monitored and for the most vulnerable countries debt resolution programmes should be elaborated. This should be combined with consideration of the wider aspects of the development agenda by the respective funds and agencies.

64. The realities of development assistance today significantly differ from those encountered even 10 years ago. South-South and triangular cooperation have gained increasing importance in delivering aid and transferring technology, knowledge and good practices. The experience of successful middle-income countries may be more suited to other middle-income countries facing similar development challenges. However, the engagement and role of the United Nations system in this context has yet to be defined in more detail.

65. In addressing the problem of limitations of productivity and technological capacities in many middle-income countries, the transfer of relevant technologies would play a vital role. This could be promoted by a facilitation mechanism for the transfer of technologies. However, any such initiative would have to manoeuvre between the patent right protections of the holders of the technologies, who are mostly based in high-income economies, and possible incentive and compensation schemes in order to improve the economic attractiveness of transferring technological knowledge to middle-income countries. This could be relevant not only in raising productivity, but also have a significant impact on making the future growth path of middle-income countries more environmentally sustainable.

66. The previous report on development cooperation with middle-income countries (A/66/220) contained a recommendation to the Member States to consider establishing a high-level panel or an ad hoc working group, which could elaborate, in greater detail, the appropriate framework with which to tackle the development challenges of middle-income countries. Although no such action has been undertaken, in order to acknowledge that the development challenges of middle-income countries may differ from the challenges faced by other groups of countries, the Member States may wish to consider such a proposal, given the ever-increasing importance of middle-income countries for the global economic and social situation.

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Culture and development

Culture and development

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/208.

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Report of the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Summary

The present report, prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, presents the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 66/208 and includes a feasibility assessment of a possible United Nations conference aimed at taking stock of the contribution of culture to development and formulating a consolidated approach to culture and development. To this end, the report outlines the work and initiatives undertaken by member States, the United Nations governing bodies, 15 United Nations bodies and the United Nations system as a whole, as well as other international entities, in building on culture for sustainable development. The report also includes recommendations for enhancing the role of culture in the post-2015 development agenda.

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/208 on culture and development, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a progress report on the implementation of the resolution and to assess, in consultation with relevant United Nations funds and programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations development system, in particular, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the feasibility of various measures, including a possible United Nations conference, to take stock of the contribution of culture to development and to formulate a consolidated approach to culture and development.

II. Nexus between culture and development

2. Following the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 65/166 and 66/208 in 2010 and 2011, respectively, the role of culture in achieving development has received greater visibility and generated interest. As the present report seeks to demonstrate, the two resolutions on culture and development have significantly advanced the debate on culture at the national and regional levels, and within the United Nations system, as well as in post-2015 agenda consultations.

3. In the year 2000, culture was absent from the sustainable development equation as defined by the Millennium Declaration and by the Millennium Development Goals. However, today, the role culture's role in achieving equitable, inclusive and sustainable development is more widely recognized and better demonstrated.

4. As the United Nations system and Member States are mobilized to evaluate the Millennium Development Goals and their related implementation and evaluation processes, and to design the priorities and mechanisms for the post-2015 agenda, the present report gives an account of the progress made and the data generated since December 2011 — with a view to informing the post-2015 agenda on culture's growing recognition both as an enabler and a driver for sustainable development, as highlighted during the July 2013 Economic and Social Council annual ministerial review and the thematic debate on culture and development organized by the President of the General Assembly in June 2013.

Culture as an enabler for sustainable development

5. The motto "one size does not fit all" implies that only when development is place-based, human centred, and responsive to the cultural context, can it yield sustainable, inclusive and equitable outcomes. Indeed, culturally informed development interventions ensure improved articulation between goals and processes and between plans and their actual implementation. This applies to areas such as health, education and infrastructure, facilitating a better fit with local values, conditions, resources, skills, and limitations.

6. Culture-led development focuses on people, and is therefore more likely to lead to greater social inclusiveness and resilience for individuals and communities, while allowing the use of local resources, skills, and knowledge.

7. Moreover, acknowledging and promoting respect for cultural diversity as part of a human rights-based approach to development can facilitate intercultural dialogue, prevent conflicts and protect the rights of individuals and marginalized groups, within and between nations, thus creating favourable conditions for achieving development goals.

Culture as a driver for sustainable development

8. Promoting and supporting cultural expressions contribute to strengthening the social capital of a community and fosters innovation, entrepreneurship, democracy and trust in public institutions.

9. The cultural sector's contribution to income-generation and job creation has convinced many member States to capitalize on culture as an activity sector capable of driving local development. Today, many cities use cultural heritage and cultural events and institutions to improve their image, stimulate urban development, and attract visitors and investments.

10. Cultural and creative industries represent one of the most rapidly expanding sectors in the global economy, accounting for 3 to 4 per cent of world gross domestic product (GDP).

11. The tourism sector — 45 per cent of which is cultural — accounts for 9 per cent of world GDP, 6 per cent of total exports from least developed countries and for 1 out of 11 jobs globally.

12. The need for culturally sensitive policies in achieving socially inclusive development is widely acknowledged.. People are able to define themselves in society and more fully realize their aspirations when respect for their culture is guaranteed. Of particular significance in this regard is the role that culture plays in enlarging peoples' capabilities to lead the lives they choose, through full participation in cultural life and full access to cultural assets and resources in all their diversity.

13. Investing in culture can effectively drive social inclusion and cohesion, and reduce violence, especially in cities. For example, through investment in cultural infrastructure and activities, the city of Medellín (Colombia) dramatically reduced urban violence homicides by up to 60 per cent in 2012.

14. Cultural factors influence lifestyles, individual behaviours, consumption patterns, values related to environmental stewardship, and interaction with the natural environment. Local and indigenous knowledge systems and environmental management practices serve as valuable insight and tools for tackling ecological challenges, preventing biodiversity loss, reducing land degradation, and mitigating the effects of climate change.

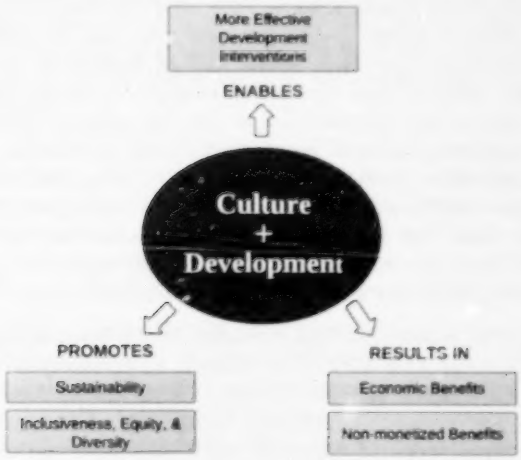
15. Appropriate conservation of the historic environment, including cultural landscapes, and the safeguarding of traditional knowledge, values and practices, in synergy with other scientific knowledge, enhances the resilience of communities to disasters and climate change.

16. Culture can be an enabler for achieving quality education, as much as education is a vehicle for transmitting shared values, knowledge and skills. There is great potential for educational curricula to promote understanding, tolerance, diversity, human rights and democracy in order to foster social cohesion, as well as

to safeguard and share culture. Arts education, conceived in the broadest sense, can also heighten learning, and develop freedom of expression and sense of self-accomplishment.

17. Integrating culture into educational policies and curricula enhances their effectiveness. Indeed, the way people learn and transmit knowledge is very different, depending on their geographical and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, educational strategies that are responsive to local cultures, contexts and needs and that take into account mother tongue and local languages and are designed in cooperation with the communities concerned, have been found most effective. The figure below illustrates the effects of culture on development:

How Culture Contributes to Development



III. Recent developments at the intergovernmental level

18. In June 2012, the Outcome Document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development provided some positive elements for mainstreaming the role of culture in the United Nations sustainable development agenda by focusing on human development and recognizing that there are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country. The Outcome Document referred to the importance of cultural diversity for sustainable development, recognized the relationship between people, their ecosystems and their cultural heritage, the importance of investing in cultural tourism, the need for conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of human settlements, for the revitalization and rehabilitation of historic districts, and acknowledged the relationship between culture and biodiversity, and the sustainable use of resources by indigenous peoples and local communities.

19. In July 2013, the 2013 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council included culture for the first time in its history as one of the themes of its annual ministerial review entitled "Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture for promoting sustainable development and in achieving Millennium Development Goals". Members of the Council acknowledged the fundamental importance of cultural diversity as a source of enrichment for humankind and a contributor to sustainable development of local communities, peoples and nations. They recognized that culture is an essential component of sustainable development, represents a source of identity, innovation and creativity for individuals and the community, and is an important factor in building social inclusion and eradicating poverty. A broad agreement emerged as to the need to promote capacity-building at all levels for the development of a dynamic cultural and creative sector, including by supporting the development of cultural institutions and industries within broader efforts to promote sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth.

20. Addressing "Employment and decent work for all, social protection, youth, education and culture", the fourth session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, held in June 2013, stressed culture's overarching role in building identity, fostering dialogue, and achieving the three dimensions of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental. It also recognized culture as both an "enabler" and "driver" of sustainable development, the need for development strategies and programmes to rely on cultural resource and respect cultural rights in adopting to local contexts, the need to build on cultural heritage management, sustainable cultural tourism, and the creative industries for economic growth, job creation, and environmentally sustainable management practices, and to promote cultural values in the educational programmes for fostering resilience, inclusiveness and dialogue. Several participants made appeals to pay due attention to culture in striving to achieve the sustainable development goals.

21. Convened at the initiative of the President of the sixty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly, Vuk Jeremić, in partnership with UNESCO, a thematic debate on culture and development, held on 12 June 2013 at United Nations Headquarters, generated exchanges on the role of culture for development, highlighted key experiences of Member States that draw on culture to address pressing issues such as poverty, discrimination and unemployment, and provided a platform to discuss ways to further use culture as a resource for achieving development goals.

22. The President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the UNDP Administrator, the UNESCO Director-General, and the High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations took part in the debate, along with Ministers and high-level Government representatives from 14 countries. The President of Ireland intervened via video message. Several regional groups stated the view that culture was both an enabler and driver of development, and should be recognized as such in the post-2015 development agenda. The need for culture to be among the key issues taken into account while defining the sustainable development goals and creating a post-2015 development agenda was also strongly stressed.

23. Between 2011 and 2013, several regional meetings focused on the role of culture in development. A short account is provided hereafter by geographical region.

24. At the fourth session of the Conference of Ministers for Culture of the African Union, held in Kinshasa, from 29 October to 2 November 2012, Ministers adopted the Kinshasa Declaration, entitled "Culture as a catalyst of socioeconomic and political transformation in Africa", which highlighted the ever-growing importance of creative and cultural industries in the world economy, and the essential role of culture in achieving peace, security and socioeconomic development. They urged putting an end to human and cultural rights violations and insisted on the primordial role of culture in ensuring regional integration and cooperation through shared African values. This resulted in the adoption of a plan of action on combating harmful traditional practices and protecting their cultural and natural heritage. Ministers advocated for the integration of culture in national development strategies and in the post-2015 development agenda.

25. The Pan-African Forum, entitled "Sources and resources for a culture of peace", held in Luanda from 26 to 28 March 2013, organized jointly by the African Union, the Government of Angola and UNESCO, focused on cultural sources and resources for sustainable peace in Africa, and natural resources as sources of conflict or opportunity for sustainable development. Its action plan recommended valuing the contribution of African culture for dialogue and reconciliation, strengthening the links between education and culture, and developing the economy of culture, as well as strengthening the role of cosmogonies and traditional and indigenous knowledge.

26. During the eighteenth annual meeting of ministers of culture of the Arab region, held in Manama on 13 and 14 November 2012, an action plan for culture was adopted. The ministers also issued the Manama Declaration, in which they called for building on culture to achieve equitable and sustainable development and social inclusion, and to foster democracy, knowledge-building, freedom of expression, creativity, shared values, dialogue, participation and human rights.

27. At its nineteenth summit, held in Bali, Indonesia, on 17 November 2011, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) issued a declaration entitled "ASEAN unity in cultural diversity: towards strengthening ASEAN community", which highlighted the role of culture in creating a peaceful and socially responsible regional space by enhancing solidarity, unity and harmony in diversity. They also stressed the potential of culture as a driver for economic growth, social cohesion and transformation, an asset for regional pride, and a vehicle for enhanced understanding between communities, and called for respect for cultural rights. The importance of culture for well-being and the realization of full human potential was further highlighted. The plan of action focused on building and enhancing the ASEAN community by fostering regional cooperation and partnerships through the strengthening of cultural and creative industries, and national cultural policies.

28. The Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting for the third international conference on small island developing States, held in Kingston from 2 to 4 July 2013, was attended by some 100 participants, including representatives of Caribbean Governments, United Nations and regional agencies and organizations and major groups. Participants stressed the critical role of cultural industries in national and regional economic development, calling upon the international community to commit to protecting natural and cultural heritage. The Kingston outcome document recognized the importance of promoting cultural identity for advancing sustainable development and called for a people-centred approach to poverty eradication.

European Union and related institutions

29. The Council of the European Union adopted a workplan for 2011 to 2014, in which it agreed to promote the integration of culture in development policies and recognized that culture-based development has relevance for all regions and in all stages of development.

30. In 2012, the European Commission issued a communication entitled "Promoting cultural and creative sectors for growth and jobs in the European Union", outlining a strategy for the cultural and creative sectors to boost the economy, foster sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion, promote and safeguard cultural and linguistic diversity, in accordance with the European Union 2020 Strategy.

31. In its final statement, the tenth Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Culture, held in Moscow on 16 April 2013, entitled "Governance of culture and promoting access to culture", stressed the importance of cultural policies to enhance democratic citizenship and social cohesion, generate economic growth and promote cultural diversity, cultural exchange and dialogue.

32. Within the framework of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention), which recognizes heritage as a resource for cultural, ecological, economic, social and political development, in September 2013, the Council launched the "Faro Steps", a European-wide initiative to raise awareness on the value of heritage for society.

33. The Conference of the Ministers of Culture of South-Eastern Europe, held in Sofia on 24 and 25 October 2012 and entitled "Intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development", issued a joint declaration highlighting culture's role in enhancing regional and bilateral cooperation, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion for sustainable development. A unified ministerial platform on culture and development in south-east Europe called for the due recognition of culture in the 2013 Economic and Social Council annual ministerial review.

34. Ministers and heads of delegations of the Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) participating in the first Eastern Partnership Ministerial Conference on Culture, held in Tbilisi on 28 June 2013, agreed to strengthen their cultural policies and creative sectors and highlighted the need to include culture in their development agendas and to encourage interministerial cooperation and partnerships with civil society on cultural issues.

35. Ministers of culture of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States issued the Suriname Declaration at their first meeting, held in Paramaribo on 14 and 15 March 2013. The Declaration underlined the importance of culture for development focusing on the potential of culture to achieve regional integration, create sociocultural spaces to enhance cultural-economic cooperation within the region, and stimulate exchanges between the countries. The ministers insisted on the need to promote cultural diversity, preserve and safeguard traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, respect cultural rights, and design culturally aware policies to promote shared values, foster culture as a means to eradicate poverty and to reduce social inequalities in the region.

IV. Progress in implementation by the United Nations system

36. Since 2011, the bodies of the United Nations system have increased their cooperation in the area of culture for sustainable development. The following initiatives were implemented at the United Nations level during the period under consideration:

United Nations Development Assistance Framework

37. In recent years, the role of culture for development has gained importance within and beyond the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.[1] A 2012 UNESCO analysis revealed that, while in the late 1990s, culture was included in only 30 per cent of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, its presence had been increasing steadily, culminating in 70 per cent inclusion by January 2012, mainly with the participation of UNESCO, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Moreover, culture is associated with all the thematic areas of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, namely: social and economic development (55 per cent), sustainable development (17 per cent), human rights (10 per cent) and governance (18 per cent).

United Nations Development Group

38. In November 2012, the United Nations Development Group established a UNESCO-chaired Task Team on Culture and Development with the participation of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP, UNFPA, UNIDO and ILO. The team will operate until late 2013. Its objectives include the implementation of the United Nations General Assembly resolutions on culture and development, facilitating the exchange of experiences and data, with a view to supporting a United Nations system-wide reflection on the impact of culture on sustainable development, both at the global and country levels, and assessing resources available within the United Nations system to support culture and development programmes, strategies, statistics and indicators at the global, regional and country level.

United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

39. In June 2012, the report of the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, entitled "Realizing the Future We Want for All" referred to the role of culture on numerous occasions and, in paragraph 71, specifically noted that it was also critical to promote equitable change that ensured people's ability to choose their value systems in peace, thereby allowing for full participation and empowerment. The report also stated that communities and individuals must be able to create and practice their own culture and enjoy that of others free from fear and that this would require, inter alia, respect for cultural

[1] UNESCO United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks survey as at January 2012: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/culture-in-the-undafs/search-tool/.

diversity, safeguarding cultural and natural heritage, fostering cultural institutions, strengthening cultural and creative industries, and promoting cultural tourism.

40. Within the framework of this task team, a United Nations "Think piece on culture and development" was presented in June 2012 among 11 thematic papers produced by the United Nations system[2] to feed the post-2015 process.

United Nations Development Programme/Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund

41. Operating from 2006 to 2013, the UNDP/Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund is an international fund of some 900 million United States dollars, intended to accelerate progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, ensure strong national ownership, and support the United Nations reform. The Fund has financed programmes implemented jointly by several United Nations agencies, together with the national authorities of some 49 countries, in eight thematic areas, including " culture and development". As the convenor of the thematic window on culture and development,[3] UNESCO, in collaboration with 15 United Nations entities, implemented 18 joint Programmes[4] with a budget of $96 million.

42. The scope of the culture and development joint programmes ranged from strengthening cultural and creative industries, developing sustainable cultural tourism, safeguarding tangible and intangible heritage, and promoting cultural diversity and pluralism, to supporting inclusive policies and ethnic minority development.

43. These programmes have contributed to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by promoting social cohesion, poverty reduction, health, environmental sustainability and gender equality. More than 1.5 million individuals directly benefited from the programmes, in particular women, youth, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, representatives of the private sector and the civil society organizations, community and religious leaders, and Government authorities.

United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization creative economy report

44. The 2013 special edition of the *Creative Economy Report* was jointly prepared by UNDP through the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and UNESCO, and is to be launched in late 2013. This report builds on the 2008 and 2010 editions of the multi-agency *Creative Economy Report* prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and UNDP through the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, in cooperation with UNESCO, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the International Trade Centre. The 2013 edition of the *Creative Economy Report* explores diverse pathways to development through creative and cultural

[2] Available from http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/thinkpieces/2_culture.pdf.

[3] See http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/achieving-the-millennium-development-goals/mdg-f-culture-and-development/.

[4] These programmes were implemented in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territories, Cambodia, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Uruguay, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Turkey.

industries and analyses ways to strengthen them in order for them to achieve inclusive social and economic development. It recognizes that many of these pathways can be found in cities and regions.

45. Moreover, the report analyses the impact of projects from across the Global South funded through the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund and the UNESCO International Fund for Cultural Diversity. Among the critical factors of success identified are local capacity development, management of assets by local populations, and transnational connections and flows. Success was found to be limited by weak public sectors. In response, a range of indicators of effectiveness and success are proposed in the report to enable local policymakers to assess, monitor and take full advantage of local potential and creative talents.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

46. As the only United Nations agency with a specific mandate in the field of culture, UNESCO has consolidated the repositioning of culture in development in recent years through a range of analytical, normative, technical, operational, and capacity-building initiatives and tools.

47. Through its arsenal of normative instruments in the field of culture, including six major conventions,[5] UNESCO has undertaken capacity-building activities with a view to training national professionals and civil society actors in heritage protection and promotion, fighting against the destruction and illicit trafficking of cultural property with a special focus on conflict and post-conflict areas, designing national legislation that facilitates the development of cultural and creative industries, protects tangible and intangible heritage, and informs national cultural policies.

48. UNESCO manages the International Fund for Cultural Diversity, designed to foster the emergence of dynamic cultural sectors in the developing world. Since 2011, 61 projects, totalling $4 million, have been supported in 40 developing countries.

49. UNESCO organized the Hangzhou International Congress, entitled "Culture: key to sustainable development" (Hangzhou, China, 15-17 May 2013), with the financial support of the Government of the People's Republic of China. As the first international congress specifically focusing on the linkages between culture and sustainable development organized by UNESCO since 1998, the encounter provided a global forum to discuss the role of culture in sustainable development in the perspective of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda.

50. The Congress' 500 participants from 82 countries — including high-level Government representatives, United Nations entities (the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP, UNCTAD, WIPO, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), UNIDO, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and the United Nations

[5] The 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols; the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property; the 1972 Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; the 2001 Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage; the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Culture Heritage; and the 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Environment Programme (UNEP), development banks and institutions, academia, the private sector and civil society, and prominent experts — addressed the contribution of culture to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, as well as to peace and security. The Congress also considered the crucial role of culture in forging sustainable cities and building resilient societies, through heritage and creativity, as well as the potential of public-private partnerships in achieving those goals.

51. Participants adopted the Hangzhou Declaration: Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies,[6] which recommended nine concrete actions to place culture at the heart of development policies, in the context of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda and beyond, namely:

(a) Integrate culture within all development policies and programmes;

(b) Mobilize culture and mutual understanding to foster peace and reconciliation;

(c) Ensure cultural rights for all to promote inclusive social development;

(d) Leverage culture for poverty reduction and inclusive economic development;

(e) Build on culture to promote environmental sustainability;

(f) Strengthen resilience to disasters and combat climate change through culture;

(g) Value, safeguard and transmit culture to future generations;

(h) Harness culture as a resource for achieving sustainable urban development and management;

(i) Capitalize on culture to foster innovative and sustainable models of cooperation.

52. In the concluding paragraph of the Declaration, participants recommended that a specific Goal focused on culture be included as part of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda, to be based on heritage, diversity, creativity and the transmission of knowledge, and including clear targets and indicators that relate culture to all dimensions of sustainable development.

53. UNESCO has continued its work on the development of indicators and statistics in the area of culture. The Culture for Development Indicators project has been piloted in 12 test countries and has produced concrete policy results at the national level. The statistics in the table below have emerged from the project.

	Added value (percentage of GDP)	*Cultural occupations (percentage of employed population)*	*Household expenditures (percentage of household expenditures)*
Scale	0-100	0-100	0-100
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5.72	4.70	2.43
Cambodia	1.53	0.54	0.30

[6] Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002212/221238m.pdf.

	Added value (percentage of GDP)	*Cultural occupations (percentage of employed population)*	*Household expenditures (percentage of household expenditures)*
Colombia	.42		2.60
Ecuador	4.76	2.20	3.41
Ghana	1.53	0.03	0.66
Namibia		0.6	9.09

54. In 2012 and 2013, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics published two handbooks, *Measuring Cultural Participation and Measuring the Economic Contribution of Cultural Industries*, that proposed a methodology to define international standards for cultural statistics. This was supported through capacity-building, training and technical assistance in Eastern Europe and the Russian Federation, Africa, south-east Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. An update and new analysis on international flows of cultural goods and services in 2013 and a global survey of the feature film sector confirmed that Nigeria is one of the largest producers of movies in the world, along with the United States of America and India, and that China, Brazil and the Republic of Korea register the highest growth rate in terms of movie production. In 2012, the Institute initiated a global cultural employment statistics survey with an anticipated global launch in 2015. The survey will establish the first international database of internationally comparable data and indicators of cultural employment. Topics will include gender equality, employment status, secondary jobs, educational profile and age profile of employed persons in the culture sector.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

55. UNIDO enhances creative assets in developing countries, by promoting heritage-related economic activities; it addresses the constraints that affect the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises in creative industries (size, isolation, lack of knowledge on market requirements and the institutional environment), works on remedy strategies, and supports Governments in translating cultural heritage into design-wise products that can meet market demands.

56. A successful example of the UNIDO strategy is its participation in the Women Entrepreneurship Development Programme in the Creative Industries funded under the joint United Nations programme entitled "Towards Gender Parity in Pakistan", through which UNIDO implements a pilot project in Pakistan, which capitalizes on creative industries and cultural heritage to create jobs and empower women. Through this initiative, UNIDO provides assistance to establish a favourable regulatory environment, build the capacities of business service providers, provide technical and managerial services to existing and potential entrepreneurs, and support the translation of cultural heritage of Pakistan into competitive, design-wise products (e.g., marble mosaics, textiles, etc.). Targeted gender-sensitive value chain analysis revealed gender inequalities and solutions for greater efficiency.

57. The business growth centres created within the framework of the project aim to enhance the capabilities, mobility, visibility and connectivity of women entrepreneurs and to serve as networking facilities for strategic public-private sector initiatives. The project has benefited more than 8,000 women and will be rolled out throughout Pakistan.

World Tourism Organization

58. In 2012, UNWTO published the first study on tourism and intangible cultural heritage,[7] which provides comprehensive baseline research on the linkages between tourism and intangible cultural heritage. The study investigates Government-led actions, public-private partnerships and community initiatives in the areas of tourism development and intangible heritage. It also proposes practical steps for the creation, management and marketing of intangible heritage-based tourism products, and recommends guidelines for tourism policymakers to foster tourism development through the safeguarding of intangible heritage.

59. In 2013, UNWTO organized several conferences on heritage and tourism, including a seminar on tourism at World Heritage sites, held in Turkey in March 2013. The International Conference on Exploring New Cultural Horizons for Tourism, held in Bahrain in April 2013, identified innovative means to widen communities' involvement in the development of tourism products based on cultural heritage assets, such as intangible heritage of host populations.

60. A joint UNWTO-UNESCO workshop on Heritage Corridors Tourism Strategy was organized in Kazakhstan in October 2013 to develop a common tourism planning and management strategy for the Silk Roads Heritage Corridor in Central Asia and China. UNWTO is also organizing, with the participation of UNESCO, a conference on tourism development on cultural and natural heritage sites in Cambodia, to be held in November 2013, to review opportunities and challenges of sustainable tourism.

World Bank

61. The World Bank Group has a growing portfolio in the areas of cultural and natural heritage, and sustainable tourism. Since the 1970s, through its International Development Association (IDA) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the Bank has financed some 320 projects and technical assistance activities for a commitment of $7 billion. Moreover, since the 1950s the International Finance Corporation (IFC) has financed approximately 280 related projects for a commitment of $2.5 billion. Currently, IDA and IBRD have approximately 110 operations under implementation covering these three areas, for a commitment of $3.5 billion; IFC has about 60 operations, for a commitment of $600 million.

62. The Bank's work in these areas focuses on conservation and development of city cores, particularly World Heritage cities. An appealing historic centre can differentiate a city from competing locations; branding the whole city nationally and internationally and helping it to attract investment and talented people. Recent studies by the Bank (including *The Economics of Uniqueness — Investing in Historic City Cores and Cultural Heritage Assets for Sustainable Development*) reveal that those cities most successful at attracting investment to meet the aspirations of their citizens — thus contributing to alleviating extreme poverty and boosting prosperity — are able to effectively harness their resources.

[7] Available from http://www.e-unwto.org/content/l62353/.

International Fund for Agricultural Development

63. At the first global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum held at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome on 11 and 12 February 2013, 28 representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations from all continents monitored and evaluated the implementation of the IFAD Policy of Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, including its contribution to the realization of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, with a view to improving benefits for indigenous peoples, building and strengthening partnerships between IFAD and indigenous peoples, and addressing the links between poverty and sustainable development and culture and identity.

World Intellectual Property Organization

64. In 2012, WIPO supported research on the economic contribution of the cultural and creative industries in over 40 countries. Through macroeconomic and specific industry studies, WIPO provided Governments with strong evidence of the broad impact of these industries, supported by copyright, on national development. Empirical results have been used in policy and strategy development, awareness-building programmes and capacity-building activities. A total of 49 training programmes and projects were organized with the participation of more than 1,400 Government officials from 96 developing countries and least developed countries. WIPO provides developing countries with copyright management tools upon request, and a new publication on intellectual property issues in film distribution was published.

65. In the context of the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property and the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights, in 2012, WIPO undertook several activities to devise legislative and practical measures to enhance access to culture, information, and educational material, including a study entitled "Using Copyright to Promote Access to Information and Creative Content". In addition, WIPO continued to facilitate a negotiation process in the area of limitations and exceptions to copyright for the benefit of educational and research institutions, persons with disabilities, libraries and archives. This process resulted in the convening of a Diplomatic Conference to Adopt a Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities, held in Marrakesh in June 2013.

66. In 2012, the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore pursued its work on "text-based negotiations" regarding the effective protection of genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions. Several technical assistance and awareness-raising initiatives to protect and promote traditional cultural expressions and cultural heritage were also carried out in 2012.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

67. In the framework of the second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, FAO launched a publication entitled "Indigenous Peoples' food systems and well-being, Interventions and policies for healthy communities". The publication focuses on findings from more than 40 partners from various disciplines who created health promotion interventions for communities using local food systems and knowledge,

through participatory processes. It presents a global overview of Indigenous Peoples' health circumstances, environmental concerns, and infant and child-feeding practices, and provides specific case studies from Canada, Japan, Peru, India, Colombia, Thailand and Micronesia. This long-term research project demonstrates the potential of local traditional food systems to improve health and well-being.

United Nations Environment Programme

68. In 2013, UNEP was designated to act as the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, which was created as an independent intergovernmental body with the goal of strengthening the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development. One of the Platform's key operating principles is to recognize and respect the contribution of indigenous and local knowledge to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services. This principle is currently being implemented in two ways, and in close collaboration with UNESCO, FAO and UNDP, through the development of procedures and approaches for working with different knowledge systems in the development of a draft conceptual framework for the Platform.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

69. Since 2000, the UNCTAD mandate has included assisting developing countries in identifying innovative policy options for optimizing the economic contributions of creative industries, and supporting them to improve institutional, regulatory and financing mechanisms, in order to foster trade and development gains towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In 2012 and 2013, UNCTAD provided support to several countries in this area.[8]

70. At the ministerial meeting of the thirteenth session of UNCTAD, held in Doha in April, 2012, Member States adopted the Doha Declaration, which mandated UNCTAD to continue to provide analytical work and technical assistance to developing countries, including in sectors related to the creative economy and entrepreneurship. The meeting was followed by a High-level policy dialogue on the creative economy for development to support Governments in enhancing this sector.

71. UNCTAD has developed the Global Database on the Creative Economy, a policy design tool and an Academic Exchange Network on Creative Economy aimed at promoting international cooperation, strategic alliances, research exchanges and advocacy. UNCTAD has also carried out policy-oriented research for the 2013 special edition of the *Creative Economy Report*.

72. In 2013, UNCTAD co-organized with the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Beijing Municipality, a Global Services Forum (Beijing, May 2013) aimed at assisting Governments in designing suitable frameworks for the management of creative resources.

[8] Countries supported included Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mozambique, Nigeria, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia.

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

73. Within the framework of its training programme on the Management and Conservation of World Heritage Sites series, UNITAR organized the tenth annual workshop of the series in Hiroshima, Japan, in April 2013 for 24 participants from 15 countries on the nomination process for World Heritage sites.

United Nations Office for Project Services

74. As part of the 2010-2014 United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) supported Argentina in strengthening its cultural institutions. Within the framework of the Ministry of Culture's Bicentennial Work Programme, UNOPS helped the Government of Argentina to refurbish historic buildings and 10 national museums through procurement services, and with the construction and equipping of the new facilities of the National Congress Library, which now house its archive and a cultural centre.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

75. UN-Habitat recognizes the symbiotic relationship between culture and development and acknowledges the transformative power of innovation and creativity to ensure quality of life, equity and environmental sustainability and economic vitality. The recognition of culture heritage as a finite resource and as means of improving social fabric is mainstreamed throughout UN-Habitat's activities, such as its work on "public space and placemaking", thus enforcing the element of preservation in sustainable urban development.

76. Together with partners such as the GoDown Arts Centre (Kenya), BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts (Belgium) and the European Commission, UN-Habitat is striving to bring arts and culture to the forefront of the development agenda. The Programme has partnered with the Swedish gaming company, Mojang AB (creators of Minecraft) to use a gaming platform developed for urban planning to encourage participatory planning, targeting often marginalized audiences, such as youth. In its report entitled "State of the World's Cities 2012/2013, Prosperity of Cities", UN-Habitat called for action to promote urban prosperity, including through cultural innovations to support the transition to the city of the twenty-first century.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

77. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) recognizes the central role of culture as a foundation of society and seeks to maximize the positive contributions of cultural leaders towards responses that: (a) achieve public health goals through the implementation of evidence-supported approaches; (b) respect the dignity and rights of individuals, particularly with regard to non-discrimination, health, security of the person, privacy and freedom from violence; and (c) include pragmatic approaches that respond to peoples' behaviours and needs. UNAIDS further recognizes the role of culture and education in achieving the three zeros, namely: (a) zero new HIV infections; (b) zero AIDS-related deaths; and (c) zero AIDS-related discrimination.

78. UNAIDS promotes inclusive dialogue in all aspects of the HIV response, acknowledging that the behaviours and known risk factors for HIV infection can be controversial and culturally sensitive. UNAIDS therefore adopts comprehensive,

evidence-based prevention treatment, care and support approaches that take into account local circumstances, ethics and cultural values.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

79. In 2011, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) adopted the "Age, gender and diversity policy: working with people and communities for equality and protection". Through the systematic application of an age, gender and diversity approach in its operations worldwide, UNHCR seeks to ensure that all persons of concern enjoy their rights on an equal footing and are able to participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives and those of their family members and communities. In this context, diversity refers to different values, attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnic background, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, health, social status, skill and other specific personal characteristics. In 2012, the age, gender and diversity accountability framework report — an annual independent assessment of the Office's progress in implementing its age, gender and diversity policy — highlighted a wide array of initiatives that were implemented to enhance the protection of displaced populations.

United Nations Population Fund

80. The Fund's Pacific Multi-Country Strategy calls for strengthened national capacity for increased availability, analysis and utilization of data on population dynamics, youth, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health, including through alliances with parliamentary groups, traditional leaders, cultural and faith-based organizations, recognizing that they are effective champions for advancing sensitive development issues.

81. In the Asia-Pacific region, an initiative funded by the European Commission was launched in the Philippines to address the rights of indigenous peoples in northern Mindanao to access information and services on sexual and reproductive health, using culturally sensitive approaches. In the spirit of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the initiative seeks to engage with indigenous communities using approaches that are acceptable to their way of life, beginning with qualitative peer research designed to better understand their needs and priorities in these areas.

82. In Ethiopia, Uganda, Malawi, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, UNFPA is partnering with traditional communities, youth, women, religious leaders and educators in the fight against female genital mutilation and gender-based violence, as well as in efforts to enhance HIV prevention and increase the use of maternal health services.

83. Malawi has passed the Gender Equality Act criminalizing harmful cultural practices related to violations of sexual reproductive health rights of girls and women. UNFPA strongly advocated that the Gender Equality Act call upon all Chiefs to adhere to it. Through the joint programme on adolescent girls, advocacy campaigns in communities and dialogue with traditional and religious leaders have resulted in reduced rates of early marriage, teenage pregnancies and school drop-outs.

84. UNFPA-Mozambique is in partnership with the University of Maputo to strengthen the scientific evidence linking culture and sexual and reproductive health

and rights, and training various cultural actors and service providers, to improve their contributions to community health and rights using a sociocultural development lens. UNFPA assisted the Ministries of Health, Education and Youth to incorporate the sociocultural approach in the annual plans of the national Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Programme, and trained the national and provincial coordinators and peer educators in the approach.

85. UNFPA-Uganda has invested in studies identifying sociocultural factors as major drivers of the HIV epidemic. UNFPA continues to work with cultural institutions in Uganda where it supported the passing of a cultural by-law on the age of marriage and its enforcement mechanism, including through the signing of marriage certificates by cultural chiefs only for those above 18 years of age.

United Nations International Children's Fund

86. Through its global, regional and national programmes and capacity-development initiatives, UNICEF addresses sociocultural factors that impact the lives of children and their communities through evidence-based and human rights focused strategies. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, UNICEF, together with the Aga Khan and Soros Foundations and local talents, developed an animated series for children called Keremet Koch (the Magic Journey) that uses culture as an entry point for dialogue to influence social change on issues related to child survival, development, protection and participation.

87. Culture provides children with identity and continuity, which is important in emergencies and crisis affected contexts. Based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF emphasizes that children's education should encourage children to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures, taking into account the context in which children grow and develop in the home and the more macroenvironments of the society. For example, in 2012, UNICEF, together with the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development, conducted an arts education programme for Syrian children in Jordanian refugee camps to help the children traumatized by the conflict to relieve their tensions and channel their energy creatively.

88. The commitment of UNICEF to equity aims at narrowing the gaps that keep back deprived and marginalized populations. Its recently developed Monitoring Results for Equity Systems framework takes into account social and cultural factors of development interventions. Behavioural and social change related to a local sociocultural system is a critical component of the framework.

V. Feasibility of a United Nations conference on culture and development

89. In its resolution 66/208, the General Assembly requested UNESCO to assess the feasibility of a possible United Nations conference to take stock of the contribution of culture to development and to formulate a consolidated approach to culture and development.

90. The 2011 report on culture and development (A/166/187) and the present report provide an overview of the work of the United Nations bodies and the diverse initiatives taken in the area of culture. Moreover, they demonstrate that culture-

sensitive approaches within the United Nations underpin mandates in areas as diverse as education, poverty alleviation, health, environmental sustainability, agriculture, food security, industry, urbanization, refugee protection, migration, social cohesion, human rights, and gender equality.

91. Both reports indicate that in the area of culture and sustainable development, the United Nations system provides technical assistance at a policy and operational level with a focus on capacity-building (institutional and human), awareness-raising, mainstreaming culture in development policy and programmes, conserving and leveraging cultural heritage, including indigenous knowledge as an asset for development, as well as generating knowledge though policy-oriented research, lessons learned through implementation, and data collection for monitoring and evaluating the impact of culture on development.

92. The present report underlines the growing collaboration within the United Nations system, among Member States, and between the United Nations and Member States, to foster the role of culture in development, and integrate it into national, regional and international policies.

93. The present report also emphasizes that a number of important developments have taken place since the launch of the post-2015 development process. Today, it is clear that the global efforts to address gaps in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and map the way forward for future development goals and approaches are better informed of culture's impact on and contribution to development, and that approaches and practices have been better consolidated and assessed within the United Nations shared policies, practices and long-term vision.

94. As demonstrated, Member States have convened numerous regional and international meetings and initiatives to discuss and reflect on the role of culture in achieving sustainable development, the highlight of which was the 2013 Economic and Social Council annual ministerial review held in Geneva from 1 to 4 July 2013, and the thematic debate convened by the President of the General Assembly at United Nations Headquarters on 12 June 2013.

95. The United Nations engaged in and finalized joint operational actions, and evidence-based strategic and policy reflections, in particular the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund — culture and development window, increased mainstreaming of culture in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework processes, the United Nations Development Group Task Team on Culture and Development, and several country-based initiatives; these actions have made it possible to strengthen and consolidate United Nations-wide approaches, strategies and operations with regard to culture's role in sustainable development.

96. UNESCO has also engaged the international community and several United Nations entities in its initiatives to build knowledge and exchange expertise and ideas on the role of culture in sustainable development in the perspective of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda, the highlight being the Hangzhou International Congress (see para. 49 above).

97. As described in the present report, the numerous initiatives undertaken in 2012-2013, together with Member States-driven discussions and statements on the contribution of culture to sustainable development, have considerably improved understanding of the contribution of culture to sustainable development.

98. The 2013 Economic and Social Council annual ministerial review on "Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals" provided an excellent platform for integrating culture in the United Nations agenda at large; it clarified the nexus between culture and sustainable development and helped to share concepts, definitions, and recommendations to be made in the framework of the post-2015 agenda.

99. In the light of the tremendous progress made, a United Nations conference on culture and development would effectively support Member States in reinforcing national, regional and international policies and operations to harness the contribution of culture to sustainable development. The conference would help to define concrete actions and implementation, measurement and monitoring tools in this field.

100. The conference could be organized as part of efforts to follow-up on and implement the post-2015 development agenda; it could last for two days and consist of plenary sessions and round tables. In addition to United Nations Member States, invitations would be extended to United Nations system executive heads, representatives of development banks, non-governmental organizations, foundations, civil society, and the private sector.

101. The conference could be organized at United Nations Headquarters or be hosted by a Member State.

VI. Conclusions

102. **Significant progress has taken place since December 2011 at the policy and operational levels, among Member States and United Nations entities, with the active and valuable involvement of civil society and the private sector.**

103. **Knowledge, experience and data on the nexus between culture and development have grown, thus providing more insight into the debate on the post-2015 development agenda.**

104. **The 2013 Economic and Social Council annual ministerial review, and the thematic debate on culture and development convened by the President of the General Assembly on 12 June 2013 constituted a turning point in the consideration by the United Nations intergovernmental process of the role of culture in the post-2015 development agenda, and have created a momentum for building on the wide range of initiatives and data described in the present report to enhance future United Nations system-wide policies and actions in this field. This is reflected in the recent appeals by Member States to give due attention to culture in national development strategies and in the post-2015 development agenda, and in future deliberations on the definition of sustainable development goals.**

105. **The present report attests that there is movement towards increased inter-agency cooperation and joint policymaking and towards consolidated and strengthened regional approaches, strategies, decisions, policies, and action plans on the role of culture in sustainable development.**

106. **The significant progress achieved and the momentum generated to date call for an insightful reflection and due consideration in order to build full awareness of the importance of integrating culture into the future United Nations agenda. At this critical juncture in the global development agenda, the crucial role that culture plays to achieve sustainable development and well-being, and to build on peoples' profoundly rooted needs and aspirations, should not be underestimated.**

107. **A United Nations conference on culture and development would be an effective tool to support Member States in translating their increasing willingness to harness culture's contribution to sustainable development into concrete international, regional and national policies and operations.**